

A LIVE NUMBER OF A LIVE MAGAZINE

SMITH'S

FEB., 1920
20 CENTS

MAGAZINE



Elizabeth Dejeans
Thelma Godfrey
Storer Clouston
Gene O'Hagan
Lillian Cahn
Madame Lonquille
Lillian Whitney
Winifred Arnold
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and others

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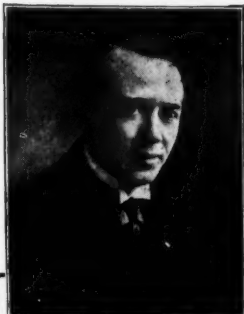


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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$2.00

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Monthly publication issued by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 79-39 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
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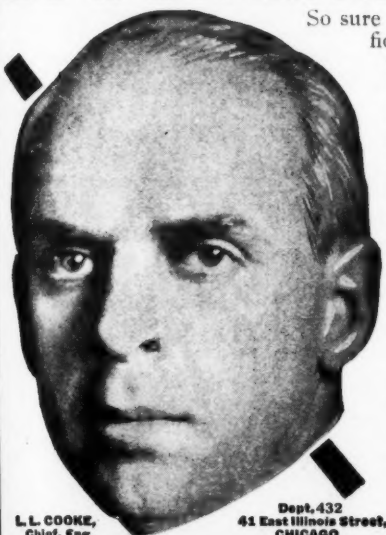
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 30

FEBRUARY, 1920

Number 5

The Accomplice

By Elizabeth Dejeans

Author of "The Tiger's Coat," "An Even Number of Odds," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

Dramatic, mystifying—a story of to-day that will carry you breathlessly to the last page.

CARSTON drew further back into the shadow of the wall and watched intently the movements of the woman across the street. The wall was high and was topped by a huge apartment house. Across the street was a vacant block, one of the many reminders of the San Francisco earthquake, a hillocky, grass-grown terrace which was on a level with the upper stories of the apartment houses on the street below. From his vantage point, Carston could see an arm of the harbor and a large area of the city.

Carston had stopped midway of the block, caught by a recollection. In the center of the vacant block had stood the house in which he had been born. Its foundation stones formed one of the many hillocks. Queer thing, life! The upheaval of nineteen hundred and five had thrust him across the Pacific, and the greatest upheaval the world had ever known—the war—had cast him back again. But there was still work for him to do.

Then he noticed the woman. A short time before, he had seen her walking slowly along the opposite sidewalk. She had paused and looked about her,

then had walked on, down the next block. Carston had thought nothing of it, even when she had returned and had again strolled along beside the vacant lots. She had paused and then had gone on.

It was when she had appeared for the third time that he became interested. He studied her intently and saw that she was cloaked in something long and black, and that she carried a big knitting bag which bulged and hung heavy. Then, Carston was galvanized by interest, for suddenly she took a package from the bag and flung it far out into the vacant lot. With that, she was off, walking rapidly.

He understood now. She had been haunting the opposite sidewalk, waiting until she thought herself unobserved. Evidently the deep shadow in which he stood had hidden him and she had thought herself safe. A queer performance, to say the least! Mysterious parcels, curiously deposited, were suspicious, for the city had its full quota of I. W. W.

Carston's first impulse was to cross the street and secure the package. He had his flash light with him; he rarely



Suddenly she took a package from the bag and flung it far out into the vacant lot.

went out without it. Then he decided that even a high explosive could do little damage there, and meantime, the woman and the load she carried would escape him. Better to see what she was about. He could return and investigate. He followed her. At the end of the next block, she turned up toward California Street, and, peeping around the corner, he saw her slip another package beneath the huge billboard

which hid the pitlike, narrow lot midway of the block. Then she was off again, up the slope.

When Carston reached California Street, she had turned cityward, and he followed her down to Stockton Street. She turned on Stockton and went for a block and a half, then cast another package into the vacant lot in the second block. With empty bag under her arm, she hurried down then to the steps of the Stockton tunnel, and as her head disappeared from view, Carston ran. He dashed down the steps and collided with a group of festive-looking people who were coming up, and reached the

mouth of the tunnel below before she could have taken more than a few steps beyond it. Nevertheless, she had disappeared.

Carston thought that possibly she had taken alarm and had tried to give him the slip by crossing the tunnel mouth and ascending again by the opposite flight of steps. He sprang up the steps, but when he reached the top, there was no one answering her description in view. He looked in every direction without result.

For a few moments he considered. For reasons of his own, Carston did not want to notify the police. He decided to be his own detective. He went up to the last empty lot the woman had chosen as a depository and came upon the package almost immediately, for in this lot there was very little litter. The parcel, wrapped in fresh newspaper and tied with string, was conspicuous. It was heavy. Carston gingerly unwrapped the package and disclosed an opened tomato can into which was tightly wedged a sealed and unlabeled can. He had no means of opening it. He decided not to carry the thing about with him, but to return for it after securing the other packages. He hid it behind a bush and marked the spot by a bit of paper twisted about a weed.

Next, Carston visited the pitlike lot below the billboard. Watching his chance, he inserted himself between the bottom of the billboard and the sidewalk and slid some fifteen feet down, landing in a heap of rubbish. He was wearing low shoes and he felt a stab of pain in his ankle, but decided that it was a scratch. Immediately, he set about his search.

This place was a catch pit of rubbish in which rusty iron and tin cans predominated. He had to move carefully in order to escape detection from above. It was the whiteness of the package which finally caught his eye.

It was larger but not so heavy as the other, and queerly soft. Carston removed several wrappings, then a paper with raw bloodstains upon it, and came upon the ribs and several vertebrae of some small creature which had been done to death, and recently, for the flesh was untainted. Carston knew very little about anatomy. Whatever it had been once, this thing was a gruesome "find," now. He wrapped it up hastily. This he was not afraid to carry.

Getting out was far more difficult than getting in, and Carston spoiled a perfectly good suit of clothes while about it. He dragged himself up finally and crawled out upon the sidewalk, panting and hot. Then he set off for the vacant lot where the woman had cast her first package.

Carston searched for some time before he found it, for it had dropped into the dip at the back of the lot. He remembered that in the old days it had been a sunken spot in the garden where, with his mother's help, he used to sow sweet alyssum seed. It was a squarish package—several wrappings of newspaper about a packet of letters which were without envelopes, and which were tied tightly with a kind of string that was as familiar to Carston as the streets of Petrograd. They were all written in the same hand and began: "Dearest Sonya."

Carston stared at them in stupefaction. He knew those letters well! He himself had penned them, breathing short over many of the sentences they contained. How well he knew them! And how less well he had known the soul of Sonya Tcherkoff, when he had written them! But how in the name of goodness did they come here, cast upon the spot where as a boy he had strewn flower seed! Who was the cloaked woman who had vanished like a smoke wreath? Sonya? If it was Sonya, the

sealed tin can over on Stockton Street was probably freighted with death.

The reflection brought Carston to his feet. He wrapped the letters up hurriedly and caught up the other package, and in a short time reached the spot where he had hidden the tin can. The twist of paper was there, but the package was not.

Carston searched the ground for yards around, then gave it up. She had outwitted him. It was possible that she had played a grim joke on him, for Sonya Tcherkoff would never have been deceived by a shadow against a wall. She was a deal better at trailing than he; he may have been the one shadowed. But this was not Red Russia, and he was wiser than of old. She might meet her match.

Carston limped down Stockton Street to the tunnel steps. His ankle had become painful. The first thing was to reach his hotel and doctor it. Happily, the hotel was near by, a sixteen-story erection of trifling circumference and stark height, suggestive of a match set upright. It swayed and trembled when the gales swept in from the bay. It had advantages, however, for at a time of killing prices, the rates were reasonable, the views glorious, and the tenants unfashionable—a satisfactory residence for one wishing to avoid old acquaintances. Carston's room was on the fifteenth floor.

The place possessed but one elevator, and this was perpetually undergoing repairs. When he limped into the office, Carston learned that the elevator was taking one of its periodic breathing spells. He thought of his ankle and swore.

"Too bad! You've had an accident, haven't you?" the night clerk remarked.

Carston merely grunted and started to climb. On the way up he met tenants who had stopped to rest and who, though they did not know him, told him just what they thought of "this

hotel!" He nodded, for he was saving his breath, and his ankle hurt abominably.

By the time Carston reached the tenth story, he felt "all in," and on the thirteenth flight he gave out. He sat down and put the parcels on the step above. He examined his ankle and found it badly swollen. "I didn't know it was as bad as that!" he said aloud. "Rusty iron, too, I suppose."

"Are you hurt?" a woman's voice asked.

Carston twisted about and looked up. A few steps above a woman was seated. She was leaning forward and regarding him intently. Her face was in the shadow, but her voice was charming, easily expressive of sympathy.

"I hurt my ankle, and climbing these stairs hasn't helped matters," he explained.

"That elevator is enough to make one lose one's religion!" she said indignantly. "Perhaps I can help you," and she rose.

But before she reached him she trod on the packages, and only Carston's quick clutch saved her from a dangerous fall. "I'm so sorry!" he exclaimed. "Have you hurt yourself?"

"No, no!" she said breathlessly. "I didn't notice——"

The light was on her face now. She was a woman in the thirties, Carston decided, and, in spite of her American speech, a foreigner. She shrugged as energetically as a Russian. There was a luxuriance about her which was not American: huge braids of dark hair, a semioval face, brows so dark and sweeping and distinctly marked as to be extraordinary, eyelids so heavy and dark-tinged that the hazel eyes were brilliant, a nose suggestive of character, and a full-lipped mouth and rounded chin which were inviting. The upper half of the face was wistful, even mysterious; the mouth alluring. It was not exactly a beautiful face, but inter-

esting; and not a girl's face, but the face of an experienced woman.

"I am not hurt," she repeated. "I thought if you leaned on my shoulder,

it would save your ankle. I am on the fifteenth floor, too."

"You're very kind," Carston answered appreciatively. Then, with the bitter depression which had become habit, "If I lose a leg because of to-night's work, I shall be getting only my deserts! 'Fool' has always been my first name, you know."

"Oh!" she said. Then cheerfully, "Not so bad as that, I fancy. I'll pick up these things first," and she began to collect the contents of the two parcels. In his haste, Carston had not tied them up, and when she had stumbled over them they had unrolled.

The letters were scattered and his gruesome "find" lay in full view.

Carston decided not to explain. The woman gathered up the letters without apparent in-

Carston knew very little about anatomy. Whatever it had been once, this thing was a gruesome "find" now.



terest, but gasped over the other thing. She looked at it, then lifted and flashed a glance at Carston, but said nothing. She wrapped a paper about it. When she returned, her expression was non-committal. "Now we are ready," she remarked. "Don't mind leaning on me. I'm strong."

Carston thanked her, and at first his touch on her shoulder was light. But presently he was glad enough of her help. His ankle felt as if it was being knifed; he breathed heavily. "Only a few more steps," she said encouragingly. "Your room is next to mine. I have been here for a week, and I saw you come out of your room one day, so I know. Give me your key."

While Carston waited, she unlocked his door and turned on the glaring light, revealing a small room, one of the cheapest in the house. Her eyes swept the room, then swept over Carston. After his experience he looked dilapidated enough, but he was past caring what she thought; he felt queerly weak and sick.

His look of suffering seemed to startle her, for she dropped the packages close to the door and put his lax arm about her shoulders. "Come to the chair," she said. "You mustn't faint."

When seated, Carston tried to take off his shoe, but could not, and, in a moment, he was vaguely conscious that she was doing it. When she drew off his shoe, things turned black, but the relief of the pressure restored him somewhat.

"Keep quiet!" she commanded. She moved his foot gently from her lap to the floor, then sprang up and darted from the room. In a few minutes she returned with a basin, towels, and a pair of scissors. She cut the sock from his foot, an added relief; and the laving in cold water which followed restored Carston's voice. "That *does* feel good," he breathed.

"It's a small, deep cut," she answered. "You must go to bed and let me send for a doctor." She looked up at him, her face grave and full of pity. "Whom shall I get? I don't know any physician."

Carston knew several whom he did not wish to see.

"I don't need a doctor," he said. He was thinking, among other things, of the curious white scars which circled his ankle. She had seen, but had said nothing.

She looked distressed.

"But you *must* have a doctor! You are ill."

"I suppose so," he said reluctantly. "Well, call Dr. McCabe. It's midnight so you'll have to call his residence. Give him my name, please—Mr. Evans."

"I will, and you can undress while I telephone from my room." She was girlishly sweet when her eyes widened, and she moved so quickly.

Carston smiled at her.

"Who am I thanking?"

"I—why, Angela Bennett."

"'Angel' Bennett," he said whimsically. "But madame or mademoiselle?"

"Mrs. Bennet," she answered.

"'Angel' Bennett, just the same," he said gravely. "You have the heartfelt thanks of a derelict, madam." His aquiline face was worn and thin, his eyes deep-set and dark, and his black hair well sprinkled with gray. He was a big-framed man, but so thin as to look gaunt. There was an air of complete depression about him.

"Your ankle will get well. Don't worry!" she said softly, and she touched his shoulder in a protective way. Then she looked confused and added hastily: "The first thing is to get a doctor."

Her speech had sounded genuinely impulsive and her confusion appeared quite real, but before closing the door, she darted a keen glance at Carston.

His back was turned. She bent swiftly and caught up the two parcels which were conveniently near the door, and took them with her.

Carston was ready for bed before he thought of the parcels. He had noticed where she had dropped them, and later he had noticed that they were still there. Now they had disappeared. Carston pondered, then smiled wryly. "'Angel' Bennett! Such disinterested eagerness to serve me! One of them, of course—an accomplice—and here I am laid up with this damned ankle! The best I can do is to play the unsuspecting." He put his money belt and papers under his pillow.

The doctor, an elderly man with grave eyes and a dry manner, told Carston that he was in a depleted condition, really an ill man. "You ought to go to a hospital. That wound may become nasty," he concluded.

"I shall stay here," Carston returned briefly.

The doctor had reached certain conclusions regarding his patient. The scars about the man's ankle were suspicious and his poverty was evident. "But you must have a nurse and proper food," he objected. "A hospital will be less expensive, in the end."

"This is a hotel, and they'll send up what I order," Carston answered impatiently. "As for a nurse, I won't have her. I'll get along all right. Do what you can for my ankle, doctor, and then let me be."

At this juncture Angela Bennett intervened. Though it was two o'clock in the morning before the doctor arrived, she had received him and had led him in to Carston.

"Why can't I be helpful?" she asked abruptly. "My room is next door. I can come in often. Besides," and she smiled, "electric stoves are not allowed, but they are used, and I like to cook."

The doctor had wondered who she was. She had spoken of the man as,

"My neighbor, Mr. Evans, who hurt his foot this evening. I have tried to do what I could for him." The man had offered no explanations. The doctor had glimpsed her room, a colorful room, orange-shaded lamps, wide, cushioned couch, and orange silk hangings, a large and pleasant room. He had noticed the door connecting this barren room and hers. She was an unusual-looking woman, and her body was certainly beautiful, well-developed yet slender. Her eyes suggested both fire and languor, her long-fingered hands energy and capability. What was she to this gaunt, worn, and yet forcible-looking man? The two interested him.

"Do you know anything about nursing?" he asked.

"I nursed during the 'flu' epidemic."

"Here?" he asked quickly.

"No."

"Where?"

"In the Orient," she answered curtly.

"I see." He did not ask, "Where?" a second time, for it was evident she would not brook curiosity.

"Yes, and if you will give me your instructions, doctor, I promise they shall be followed to the letter."

The person most concerned said not a word. When she made her offer, he turned his deep-set eyes upon her; then he looked away. His silence evidently being an acceptance, the doctor merely said, "Well, we will see how he is to-morrow." But his parting injunction to Carston was peremptory. "You must not move from that bed, remember, and no talking or excitement."

Carston looked at him then.

"You're not talking to a novice, doctor," he said coolly. "I've been wounded before. You'll find money in the breast pocket of my coat, Mrs. Bennett, so order whatever you like. I'm greatly obliged to you both," and he settled his shoulders and turned to the wall like one bent upon silence.



"I'm so sorry!" he exclaimed. "Have you hurt yourself?"

"No, no!" she said breathlessly. "I didn't notice—"

The doctor left, and on his way down he looked at the memorandum he had made:

William Evans, residence Hotel Arth.

Born in San Francisco. Forty-four years old.

Health as a general thing, perfect. Never drinks to excess.

Six weeks recovered from "flu." Weakness and depletion, but no organic troubles resultant.

Wound in ankle caused supposedly by a

bit of sharp, rusty iron received in a fall when crossing an empty lot.

Scars about ankle such as would be caused by a convict's shackle. Patient gave no explanation of them.

Mental depression evident.

The doctor reflected, "Interesting couple! She's vividly alive, but he looks as if he expected nothing of life."

For the first eight hours, Carston slept heavily. The doctor came at noon, observed him closely, and said to Angela Bennett, "I was afraid of it last night; it's 'flu.'"

"I was certain of it," she answered.

Then the doctor said: "Unless you are really competent, it's my duty to call a professional nurse. I've learned not to play with the 'flu.'"

She appeared to be prepared, for she handed him a letter. "Read that and judge," she said.

The doctor was both surprised and puzzled, for it was a letter of appreciation for voluntary services rendered, and from no less source than the Japanese Imperial Government, and addressed as to a woman of note. "But this refers to a Mrs. Angela Trieste?" he objected. "Mr. Evans called you Mrs. Bennett."

"My present married name is Bennett," she said smilingly.

"Oh, then you have recently married? Is your husband with you, Mrs. Bennett?"

"No."

The doctor did not know what to say, certainly not that she might have come by the letter unfairly. Such an idea did not occur to him. Her "no" completely negated a husband and decidedly warned him to mind his own business. And, withal, she looked amused. Then, suddenly, the smile fled from her eyes. "That letter is something of a recommendation," she said with terse sarcasm, "but you are not the Emperor of Japan and this is your case, so the moment I show myself incompetent, pray fire me!"

Doctor McCabe had already decided. This woman, whoever she was, was equal to most situations; also, she was tremendously interested in the man. The man had feigned indifference and she had implied that she was practically a stranger to him. It was simply the usual thing and a negated husband. But that was not his business. Undoubtedly she was capable. "Did you notice the changes I have made in his room?" she asked.

The doctor had noticed. She had transformed the dreary room. One of her lamps adorned the table; the battered trunk had gained a cover; there were orange silk hangings at the window. "Yes, it looks cheerful," he conceded.

"More than that, I have permission to open the connecting door into my room and that will give him better air and a vista. He needs a vista badly; he's depressed. You see, I've told them that I am engaged as nurse on this case and they are so pleased to discover what my profession is."

Again her eyes laughed, then grew grave.

"We're going to pull him through," she said resolutely. "There is such a thing as imbibing vitality from another,

and I have plenty of it to spare." Then, suddenly, she held out both hands to him, her expressive face alight. "Dear doctor, let us be friends! Say a good word for me downstairs. Come, have a heart!"

Doctor McCabe was the least impulsive of beings, but, under a dry crust, he had a kindly heart, and deep in him was a strain of romance. If he was any judge, this woman loved that derelict-looking six feet of man very completely and she would nurse her beloved with absolute devotion. He liked her. There was a bigness about her, tremendous vim and cheer.

"Very well!" he said, apparently unresponsive. "Go ahead, and I'll see whether your nursing agrees with him. I'm afraid he's going to be a very sick man."

Evans Carston, let us call him, was indeed "a very sick man." Before night set in, his fever had risen to an alarming height. He talked steadily to Angela Bennett. He called her Sonya.

"It's a hideous thing you've given yourself to!" he said with passionate pleading. "I tell you that for the first time this wretched country is having its chance—a bloodless revolution—why, it's marvelous! Your Bolsheviki! A pack of hungry wolves! Down with imperialism! Down with the bourgeoisie and a moderate republic! Riot and shambles, that's what it will be!"

His voice deepened into bitter contempt.

"Brotherhood of man," he went on, "equal division of property, freedom for all! Were it really that, I might have sympathy with you, Sonya. But yours is a passion for power more sinister than the madness of the kaiser. He has at least evolved a system, but you are incapable of evolving anything but destruction.

"The terrible thing is that you will be setting a torch to the whole world; you are planning to do it. And why?

Because out of universal destruction your group expects to create an imperialism greater than Russia has ever known. And you would be a ruling she-wolf."

His voice rose again.

"No! I will not lend a hand! The glimpse into your warped soul has sickened me! It has very nearly killed me! No, I'm not afraid of your threats or——"

Angela Bennett had followed the doctor's instructions in case of violent delirium, and in time he quieted into the weaker complaints of suffering.

"Why do you keep me underground with this iron cutting into my flesh?" he sighed. "Before I'm found and proved no Russian, my foot will rot away from my ankle. They're holding high carnival in Petrograd, the butchers." Then, in some exaltation of pain, "Oh, America, America! Will these horrors spread to you? My beautiful country!" And there followed his prayer: "Lord, lead me out of this misery and into my own country, that I may help to beat out the flames."

Angela Bennett listened intently to such sentences. She held his hand and smoothed his brow.

"How will you do it?" she asked gently. "What is your plan? Tell me?"

But he wandered away to the days before disillusion. It was Sonya's hand in his, Sonya's fingers on his forehead. He whispered of his mother and the sunken garden behind the great house. They were proud people, the Carstons. They had helped to build the fair city, and then the earthquake had torn it down. But his mother and father had not lived to see him ruined by its ruin. With Angela Bennett's hand held to his lips, he asked tenderly:

"Is it sweet alyssum your fingers have held, loved one? It takes me back to the old garden." Then he whispered his high hopes. "The mines will give us a fortune, dear one. And this, your

country, shall be mine—a reconstructed country, for Germany shall not conquer! She cannot; the triumph of evil is not possible, Sonya!"

Angela Bennett's cheeks flushed as she listened.

When the doctor came, he found her sitting with her hand on his patient's wrist. The man had dropped into moaning incoherence, but his fever was at a terrific height. Angela Bennett looked at the doctor, her eyes very bright. "His heart will bear the strain—it's strong?"

The doctor said nothing.

"And there are no signs of pneumonia?" unsteadily.

"Watch the thermometer; there's a chilly gale brewing," was the doctor's answer.

"His ankle looks well," she asserted bravely.

The doctor looked into her anxious eyes and suddenly quoted:

"And then a wonder came to light,
That showed the rogues they lied,
The man recovered from the bite,
The dog it was that died."

Angela Bennett relaxed and smiled.

"It's just a case of watchful waiting, isn't it?"

"Yes. Are you good for the night?"

"Good for as long as he is in danger!" she answered with a flash of the eye.

The doctor thought that if ever there was a capable nurse, she was. She had "nerve," endurance, and a rare intelligence.

"Watch the thermometer." Toward midnight, Angela Bennett looked at it frequently, for a gale laden with rain set in from the bay. Carston's window faced oceanward and the rain beat upon it like a million angry baby hands. The wind tore and wrangled around that fifteenth story, now roaring its rage, now whistling ominously through set teeth. The building swayed and trem-

bled. The sick man's fever rose another degree; he burned and burned.

The dawn came late and gray and storm-driven. The doctor came with it. Angela Bennett was as white now as her apron. Her heavy eyelids drooped, but from beneath them gleamed fire.

"You must have some one with you," the doctor said.

"Whoever you like," she answered, "but I shall stay through to-night."

Both knew that there would probably be no "to-night," for the man's fever was abnormally abnormal.

"I shall bring a nurse to relieve you," the doctor said.

"Yes, he will need her when he is convalescent."

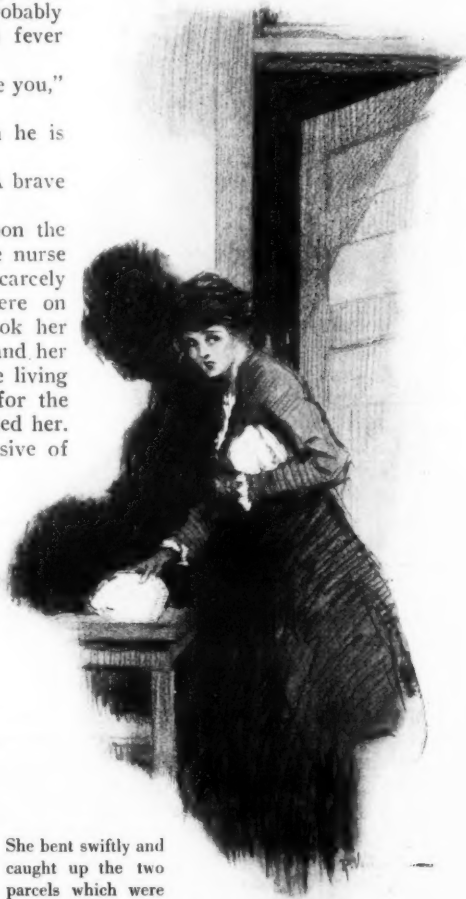
To himself the doctor said, "A brave woman!"

The day dragged on. At noon the doctor came again, bringing the nurse with him. Angela Bennett scarcely noticed them. Her fingers were on Carston's wrist. The nurse took her position at the foot of the bed and her attention was given more to the living than to the apparently dying, for the face of Angela Bennett fascinated her. It was so tremendously expressive of *concentration*, of a mighty giving out, as if through those long fingers of hers she was steadily pouring endurance into a body tortured and devoured by fire, vitality into a brain that was failing. When the man moaned, her lips parted.

Then, in midafternoon, the gale suddenly dropped, the rain as suddenly ceased, clouds of fog settled upon the city and as suddenly melted away, and the California sunshine dazzled the earth. The nurse rose and turned off the heat and drew down the window shades and was returning when she saw Angela Bennett

get up and sway. But when she reached her, Angela Bennett gripped her shoulder. "No," she said, her lips gray but her eyes brilliant. "Don't you *see*—temperature—dropped!" She sank limply into the nurse's arms.

In the days that followed, Doctor McCabe was a puzzled man, for after



She bent swiftly and caught up the two parcels which were conveniently near the door.

he had said to Angela Bennett, "I think you have pulled him through," she appeared to have washed her hands of the affair. She retired to her room, and the connecting door was locked. She left a note for Carston; that was all. She wrote:

DEAR MR. EVANS: The doctor says you are out of danger, for which my congratulations! I want also to say that your money belt and papers are in your trunk. They made your pillow so lumpy that I took them out. Your keys are under your mattress.

I am so very glad that you are better. If there is anything I can do for you, please remember that I am still your neighbor.

With every good wish,

ANGELA BENNETT.

Carston read the note without remark.

The nurse told the doctor, "He's the silentest patient I ever had. He must do a deal of thinking to make up for it."

The doctor judged that both Carston and Mrs. Bennett had an eye on the conventions, and that when the nurse left it would be different. He was so much interested in the two that he started a little investigation of his own which bore fruit later on.

In the meantime, Carston was convalescing. He was thinking and planning. He had not expected a second attack of the "flu." It was unfortunate that Angela Bennett had learned his plans, for the papers she had taken from beneath his pillow were notes for his lectures and the correspondence he had had with prominent men, regarding an organization they were planning in opposition to the Bolsheviks. Sonya knew now. Angela Bennett had succeeded in her undertaking!

But Carston could not explain the three parcels. Why were they thrown out in those lots? And why had Angela Bennett stolen the two parcels he had secured? They gave his full name and his connection with Sonya

Tcherkoff; otherwise they were of no value to anybody. Why should she risk his suspicion? In every other respect she had been so clever.

Carston decided that as soon as the nurse left, Angela Bennett would renew her attentions, if for no other object than to keep him, as she thought, unsuspecting. She might try to play Sonya's game, try to inveigle him into parting with his mines. Sonya had not succeeded, and then they had tried imprisonment and torture. They had made the mines a dead weight on his hands, but they had not been able to steal them, thanks to his powers of endurance! Carston decided that he must play a part, until he was a well man. He wrote to the anti-Bolshevism organization that he felt certain their plans were known to the enemy. To Angela Bennett he wrote:

DEAR MRS. BENNETT: I wish I could say to you all the things the man who fell among thieves must have said to the good Samaritan, but I handle my pen awkwardly. Still, I am beginning to think that I am actually going to have a future in which to redeem myself. In view of the past, we should be the best of friends. Shall we be? Meantime, believe me, yours most gratefully,

WILLIAM EVANS.

When Angela Bennett read the note, she flamed scarlet and tore it into shreds. Then she walked the floor, her brows drawn in intent thought. But, whatever her thoughts, when Carston's nurse departed, she presented herself with the same air of sympathetic cordiality which she had worn when she first met him. "So you have reached the chair stage?" she said brightly. "I brought you these California poppies because they match your curtains."

"Your curtains," he corrected. He rose and bowed over her hand. "I have enjoyed the curtains and I shall enjoy the poppies. I am a most fortunate and a very grateful man, Mrs. Bennett."

He spoke smoothly, smilingly. Her



"Do you know anything about nursing?" he asked.

color rose, but her manner did not change.

"Do sit down! You are not fit to stand. I came to ask whether you feel able to walk as far as my room this evening? I thought you might enjoy the change."

"Escape from this room! I shall be only too delighted!" Despite his easy manner, he was pathetic; not merely because of great physical strength depleted, but because of the nameless something which a terrible mental and physical ordeal stamps upon a man. His voice was arresting, very deep, and with an appealing quality. It would easily sway an audience.

Angela Bennett's remark was no index to her thoughts.

"I am glad you feel able to come. I shall cook an early supper on my electric stove. I love getting my own supper! But I shall be all cleared away by seven."

"At seven, then. Thank you very much!"

Carston watched her departure, the quick, live turn and twist of her beautiful body, and the inviting smile. Beauty and cleverness combined! "It will be a case of watchful waiting," Carston thought.

And, in the week that followed, he adhered closely to that policy, waiting

determinedly for the return of health, watching interestedly the enigma called Angela Bennett. He saw much of her, and it was a curious situation. Even when Carston's interest became so acute that he spent most of his time trying to solve the mystery about her, his will was bent upon giving her nothing of himself. He succeeded in being a charmingly impervious man of the world and extraordinarily impersonal; he asked not a single, personal question. And if she was playing up to him, she did it most cleverly; not a personal question did she ask. Her rôle seemed to be purely that of entertainer, her object to make him smile *genuinely*.

And never once did she play upon the physical chord. That puzzled Carston, for he had steeled himself against seduction. He could not dissociate her from Sonya. Then he decided that it was the subtler form of attraction she was practicing on him, the allurements of the apparently unattainable. He admitted to himself that she was beautiful, and that, to the unsuspecting, she would seem more than fascinating, a most lovable woman.

But *why* this persistent expenditure of herself upon him? She must know that she was not succeeding. All she was accomplishing was his rapid return to health. His expression changed; he squared his shoulders; he set to work upon his lectures. She was preparing some *dénouement*, but it wouldn't be what *she* expected. He was completely interested and determinedly antagonistic.

There was a *dénouement*, but not what Carston expected. It was the chambermaid who told him, "The lady next door went off unexpected last night, and now me with a room to clean on Sunday!"

After a pause, Carston asked, "But only for a few days?"

"No, for good. The manager told the housekeeper he didn't know she was

going or where she went, but he didn't care, for she was paid up to the end of the month."

Carston said no more. So she had gone to her associates! But, as he looked at her lamp and the orange curtains, he felt desolate, a dull ache. Then, aimlessly, he took up the Sunday paper and stiffened into rage, for beneath bold headlines was expressed the anger of the city over a bomb outrage, the wrecking of a home and the death of a woman, an innocent victim. "The authorities are convinced that this is but one of a series of like outrages which have been planned by a Bolshevik group," the article stated.

The blood sang in Carston's ears. No wonder she had fled! They had been planning this sort of thing and he had sat still and trifled. He had excused himself for not stating his suspicions by telling himself that he had no actual *proof* to offer, while the bitter truth was that, beneath his distrust, there had been the persistent remembrance of the way she had nursed his foot in her lap, the gravely pitying way in which she had looked at him.

He sprang up and walked the floor. He did not pause when some one knocked. "Come in!" he called.

It was Angela Bennett who entered.

Carston stopped dead and stared at her, his brows lowered.

"You?" he said.

The smile left her eyes, for he was looking at her as one might at a snake. "I came—to tell you—something," she answered uncertainly.

"Well?" he whipped out the word.

"I left last night, but I came back to explain——"

She paused with a bewildered air, for Carston walked by her, locked his door and pocketed the key. Then he faced her, tight-lipped and grim.

"Perhaps you will 'explain' why you came here in the first place," he said ominously.

Her eyes did not waver, but she paled.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you fastened yourself on me for a purpose; that you examined my papers and learned all you could about my plans, all the time trying to lull any suspicions I might make. I mean that you are Sonya Tcherkoff's accomplice, Angela Bennett, and that you shall tell the secret service a few things which may interest them!"

She had stiffened until she looked as immovable as Lot's wife. Then her lips parted.

"I, a Bolshevik—an accomplice! So that's what has troubled you!"

Then her frozen amazement dissolved, her face quivered into a smile, her eyes grew brilliant. With a swift movement, she caught the lapels of his coat and shook him gently, laughter in every word.

"I, a Bolshevik! Why, I'm Angela Trieste! I've written things for which they would like to bomb me! Don't you know what I have written? Haven't you read any of my novels, or seen my photograph? It's there in this morning's paper!" and she scattered the sheets right and left until she found what she wanted, a notice headed: "Well-known Author in the City," and beneath it a photograph. Then she faced him, the photograph held to her chin. "Know me?" she demanded, half gayly, half reproachfully. "Wake up, William Evans Carston!"

Carston looked at the photograph, then into her eyes for a long moment. Then he looked down.

"Yes, I know now. I told you 'Fool' has always been my first name."

There was a lilt in her voice as she said: "And I said, 'Not so bad as that, I fancy.' Come and sit down. You're big, but you're not as strong as you should be yet."

He followed her dazedly and she seated herself before him.

"Now, ask me whatever you like," she said laughingly, "and I'll answer!"

Carston longed to ask: "Why have you interested yourself in me?" He knew Angela Trieste and her history. She was a woman who had climbed steadily up the ladder of success. He was emotionally stirred, deeply flushed.

"Those letters of mine to a woman who proved so unworthy that she cured me of everything but disgust—why did you take them and keep them?" And because he could not resist, "You were 'Angel' Bennett to me before you did that—as you are now."

"Because they had been given to me, and when I took them from your room, I had no idea that you had written them," she said hurriedly. "I will tell you about that later. When I unpacked here, I wrapped the letters in a newspaper and put them on a shelf in my closet."

She hesitated and began to smile reminiscently.

"You know that I passionately like to cook. Well, cooking in one's room is forbidden, but the awfullest penalty is disposing of the garbage. I puzzled over it until I thought of the empty lots into which it is forbidden to cast garbage. So, one evening I collected the parcels of stuff I had wrapped in paper, and filled my knitting bag with them, and took a walk. I had to go that night for I had cooked a rabbit for supper and had to get rid of the remains. Now you know who it was you followed, for it must have been you who ran after me. I thought I was going to be arrested!"

"So you were the cloaked woman! But where did you hide yourself?"

"I didn't hide. I wrote a story once about a woman who escaped the police by turning her cloak inside out. Mine was lined with white satin. I turned it and dared you still more by going back up the steps, behind a group of people who were coming up. They



Carston walked by her, locked his door and pocketed the key.

looked as if they were going to a party, and so did I. I didn't dare to look at you as you passed me, and I kept on with the group who crossed the street and went into a hotel. I went, too, and sat in the lobby for an hour. I was really frightened. Then I hurried home. The elevator wasn't running, so I left my cloak and bag in the office. When you came up, I was resting."

Carston laughed at her commingling of fun and gravity. It did not matter now, but he asked:

"Then you didn't go back for the last package you threw away? Some one took it away."

"Indeed not! I was much too frightened. Some one must have seen and

was curious enough to do it. Well, all they secured was a can of very poor soup. I had two cans of that soup. I didn't like it, so I threw the other away. I had washed off the label so the chambermaid wouldn't guess it was soup. I put it into an empty tomato can and rid myself of both together."

"But the letters? Why did you throw them away?"

"I didn't mean to. I think they must have fallen from the shelf, and been picked up with the other packages which were on the closet floor. I never suspected how it was until I saw those miserable ribs of the rabbit lying on the stairs here, like a ghost come to haunt me. Then I glanced at the letters and guessed what had happened,

I also guessed how you had hurt yourself. I felt ashamed and responsible. You must have thought it a strange performance. And you looked so fearfully tired and suffering!" She hesitated. "I—I am apt to study faces. Your face is unusual. I wanted to do all I could for you."

To himself Carston said, "It was only pity." Aloud he asked, "Are you going to tell me who gave you the letters?"

She looked like one facing something painful.

"Yes. Coming back from Japan, I shared a cabin with a Russian woman who called herself Madame Karloff. She was beautiful and interesting and was supposed to be coming to San Francisco to join a sister who was married to an American. She was bitter against the Bolsheviks and told us things that made our hair rise. Every one pitied her. Then she was stricken by the 'flu'—a number on board had it. I had nursed in the epidemic in Japan so I wasn't afraid of it, and I did what I could for her.

"Her brooding face was terrible! I felt that she was suffering mental tortures, but I did not suspect her, even when she gave me a packet of letters to deliver to her sister. 'It was the great love of my sister's life,' she told me. 'Read them, madame. You write and they will interest you. And, madame, will you kindly see that my sister receives them? When you land, send to this address notice of where you live, and my sister will call for them. Also you can tell her of me, for, with me, I know it is the end. I ask also that they bury me at sea. There is no hereafter—I do not believe in it.' She repeated again and again, 'All means are justified by the cause.' She died that night."

Angela stopped and looked down at her folded hands, not at Carston.

"And the woman was Sonya Tcherkoff," he said quietly.

"Yes."

"But the letters?" Carston asked like one passing on to a matter of greater importance. "Why did she want them preserved? Did they contain a message to her associates in this country?"

Angela Bennett drew a long breath.

"Exactly—that! But such a possibility never occurred to me until you talked in your delirium of Russia and of Sonya Tcherkoff and the Bolsheviks, and called yourself 'Evans Carston.' Then I suspected who Madame Karloff was and that she had meant to use me, too.

"For three days I couldn't leave you, you were too *desperately* ill, but afterward I examined every word of those letters through a magnifying glass, and I found that the postscripts to the letters were out of keeping with the main letter, the subject matter was odd, and the writing differed slightly. For instance, one postscript said: 'I forgot to tell you, G. F. will arrive in America on July first.' Another spoke of 'a shipment of toys for my sister's children in San Francisco.'

"I decided then to give the letters at once to the secret service. I couldn't consult you, you were too ill, but I thought it was what you would do. I explained fully, but they have their own methods, those people. They merely thanked me and made me promise to be silent, and not even to tell you until they gave their permission. So all I could do was to get you well as soon as possible. You were very polite and queer. I felt that you considered me a forward, designing woman. But that you thought me an 'accomplice'—that never occurred to me!"

For a moment she looked completely mischievous. Then she sobered.

"This morning they told me I could tell you. It seems they could not decipher the letters in time to prevent the bomb outrage of last night, but the let-

ters have given them information about the group who are operating here. They have arrested them all."

Carston was keen with interest.

"Good work! I suppose they were too wary to call for the letters, when you notified them."

She hesitated.

"But—I didn't notify them," she faltered. "I was so busy, I neglected to." Then, as if compelled by honesty: "The real reason was that I wasn't in a hurry to part with them. I used to take them down from the shelf and read them. I—they were wonderful letters, I think. I have never read anything like them. Such worship of the soul of a woman—far more than you adored her body!"

"That's true—the soul she did not possess, however," Carston said quietly. "When a love like that is killed, it is very dead!"

She said nothing and there was a long silence. She was looking down, and Carston did not take his eyes from her face. Finally he asked:

"Why did you run away last night?"

She laughed off her embarrassment.

"That dear, dry, old doctor! He doesn't seem to know much about author folk. He asked a newspaper man who Angela Trieste was, and then the fat was in the fire! Last evening the reporters called me up. I had come to this house and used my married name, a thing I hadn't done since I lost my husband—not for years—because I wanted to be let alone and do some writing. Also, I wanted to cook in peace. But such a place! Fancy this elevator going back on my callers! Last night I ran away to a hotel where I can support my dignity. But I'm only two doors away."

"That's good! I'll move, too!" Carston declared. "I came here to hide, too—from my old-time friends. Cars-

ton is a pretty well-known name in this city!" Then he said as simply as a boy, "You see, I want you to think well of me. I'm not really a pauper. I have valuable property here, like that vacant block; and when Russia settles down, there are the mines. But the best thing is my work! You like what I am going to do, don't you—to lecture?"

"Indeed I do! Your voice will stir any audience!"

Her eyes were very bright, her smile tender.

It was her smile that suddenly gave him courage to ask the question he had been asking himself for the last hour.

"You said that for three days you couldn't leave me. Why did you fight death like that?"

She caught her breath and grew scarlet. But he had grown quite white.

"Was it just pity? Tell me if it was—I must know, for I've been thinking as I sat here that the woman I have always longed for was smiling at me."

Still she was silent, her head bent.

"Do you know how I felt when I heard that you had gone? In spite of my ugly suspicions, I felt utterly desolate. It was anger at the ache in me and anger at my secret gladness that you were back again that made me so harsh. Angela, I want the wonderful thing that is you, brain and beauty, the loveliness of you—so badly!" His hands were on hers, his head bent to hers. "Tell me!"

She turned her face a little and smiled oddly.

"Why, I tried to keep you alive, I suppose, because I hoped that some day you would call me—*your* accomplice."

For an instant he pondered it, his eyes on hers. Then his arms took her.

"'Accomplice' means 'helper,' Angela," he said against her lips.

"Yes," she whispered.





The Case for Romance

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "Her Own Price," "The Precious Hour," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

"And so, is romance seeing things as they are not, or understanding them as they are?" After reading this little story, taken from life itself, perhaps you can suggest a better answer to Miss Godfrey's query.

LORNA was entirely aware that romance did not abide in small towns. She had looked Sandy Center over thoroughly and couldn't discover that it had ever been there. And Lorna's eyes, though dreamy, were not at all shortsighted. Love and marriage were romantic in books, on far-flung Southern seas, on gorgeous tropic isles, in English country houses, in the Limberlost, under Western stars, and doubtless in cities of at least fifty thousand inhabitants, but not in Sandy Center.

People in Sandy Center, gawky, tow-headed boys and gangling, giggling girls, didn't fall in love, they just "got sweet on each other." And there's certainly no romance in a courtship that consists in hanging over gates, pulling taffy, going chugging in a Ford, sauntering home from church socials, and giggling together at Sunday-school picnics. D'y'e call that *romance*? As for *marriage*! The only difference that Lorna could see between being married and being the hired girl was the twins. In Sandy Center, that is, of course.

In cities of fifty thousand—or was it five million—things were vastly different. There, slim young men in pinch-

back suits caught your eye in the subway, and the next day your path was strewn with orchids. There, love came in terms of low-hung sport cars, splendid balls, luncheons, teas, dinners, and suppers at gilded cafés. There were the theater, matinées, studio parties, seagoing yachts! You met him again on the Riviera. He followed you to Venice! Ah, the gondola gliding over black water between mysterious palaces, his low voice, tense with passion, murmuring: "When I was a king in Babylon, and you were a Christian slave!"

One day Sam Willets walked home from school with her and on an impulse she asked him if he thought he'd ever been a king in Babylon, and he snickered. "Aw, g'wan! What's eatin' you?" he said. And she was just *going* to think him a nice boy.

Lorna had been about fourteen at that time, but at nineteen she had not greatly outgrown the earlier trend. She was slight and pretty, and she was following a dream. Toward its realization she bent every plan, every energy, every scrimped penny. It was a dream of that will o' the wisp, romance. And she dreamed, as we all dream of happiness, as something to be had some-

where else. Accordingly, she learned stenography and went to the city.

Armed with the address of a girls' boarding house where "young women, employed or students, might find a carefully conducted home at reasonable rates," she was soon settled and searching for employment. One of the girls there remarked that employment was such a lovely word if only it didn't invariably mean work.

Lorna went through the regular ordeal of walking countless miles, waiting endlessly and futilely in countless offices, of searching Help Wanted columns, of finding coveted positions taken, of being rudely treated, stared at, ignored, of having blistered heels, running the stereotyped gamut of hope, weariness, hope renewed, neglect, dejection, despair. But behind the despair, the fright, the weariness, was the dramatization of her hardships and emotions. After all, were not these the usual things that happened to heroines? This was the seeking, the striving, the young adventure, and if not exactly pleasant, it held, according to the books, the promise of high romance, which, she assured herself, the smug safety of Sandy Center did not. She tried to be patient, while her money dwindled. She grew pale and shabby and that anxiety at the world's indifference to her small affairs grew almost to panic. Hers, she began dimly to suspect, was to be tragedy and not the romantic drama with a touch of exquisite comedy she had pictured.

Just then she got a job. It was with a handsome young attorney engaged in fighting graft, nor with a theatrical producer who was to see in her the exact type for the heroine of his new play, nor with a novelist who studied her for the sweet subtleties of the eternal feminine, but with a gruff old gentleman in the lumber business, named Baldwin. He paid her ten dollars a week and got twenty dollars'

worth of work out of her. She was so tired at night that she didn't even dream.

Most of the men who came in to see Mr. Baldwin were unattractive, immaculate neither in dress nor language, and so frequently had splinters in their fingers. They paid no attention to Mr. Baldwin's stenographer. To be sure, one day she dropped a pencil and Mr. Baldwin's nephew, Wells W. Brown, picked it up for her. He was some sort of contractor, she understood, an ordinary-looking young man with reddish hair, not tall nor especially short, not fat nor thin, not sad, nor merry, nor with any attribute that would make you look at him twice. He had kind of nice eyes. He often wore flannel shirts, and sometimes had muddy shoes. Once on a hot day he brought her an ice-cream cone, which was funny and boyish of him. It was quite refreshing, though!

After three months, her only pair of shoes threatening to give out, she mustered courage to ask Mr. Baldwin for a raise and found herself fired with breath-taking promptness.

"There's forty thousand girls in this town, as like you as two peas, and tickled to death with ten a week," said Mr. Baldwin. "Don't want anybody who *thinks* she's worth more."

A few days later she met Wells Brown on the street.

"See you're not working for my uncle any more," he said. He seemed nervous.

"No." Lorna met his gray eyes with her serious dark-blue ones.

"What—what was the trouble, if I may ask?"

"Well, I couldn't work any longer for ten dollars a week."

"Is that what he was paying you? The old skinflint! I'll talk to him, Miss Hopkins."

"No—no. Please don't. I don't want to go back there, anyway."

"Oh, all right. I—if I hear of anything, I'll let you know."

"Thank you so much," said Lorna rather coolly. It was so tactless of him to urge her into explaining her income. It humiliated her, and it was none of his business, anyway. She was afraid he'd notice her shoes so she said good-by and walked on.

Instead of going on himself he ran after her.

"I forgot to get your address," he said. He pulled out a notebook and wrote down her street number, which she could hardly refuse to give him. "Might hear of something," he said cheerfully.

"Thanks, but don't bother." She nodded, and this time got away. Why didn't she tell him she *had* a position? Oh, well, he meant well, and he wasn't a bad sort. She didn't mean not to be nice to him. He acted somehow as if he were afraid of her.

She wasn't doing so much dramatizing these days. She didn't remark her pale, slender, golden-headed beauty in her mirror. She was more likely to consider what she could afford for dinner. She had left the girls' boarding house for an eight-by-ten third-floor-back where no one knew your affairs.



"Aw, g'wan! What's eatin' you?" he said.

It was cheaper. She wasn't going back home, yet.

She had one name, Arthur Carrington Millard, Architect, that she hadn't got around to. Of course, it wouldn't be much use to try there, because the place would be gone this second day. It was raining, though, and there seemed a sort of stern virtue in her going out on this forlorn hope, so she went.

Arthur Carrington Millard had ele-

gant offices in a fine building. There did not seem to be any rush of business, however, and very shortly she was ushered by a spruce office boy into the private office of the aforesaid Arthur C. Millard.

He was stifling a yawn as she entered, but it was he and not she herself, this time, who mentally likened her to a "drenched lily." He was a good-looking young man, expensively tailored, with rather heavy-lidded eyes and a lazily graceful way of moving.

"You have not engaged a stenographer?" Lorna asked quietly, for many encounters had given her the poise of accustomedness.

"I happened to be called away yesterday when the multitude descended," he returned. "You've had some experience, I suppose?"

"Yes." She did not say where, and to her surprise he did not insist on details.

"How much?" he inquired lazily.

"Fifteen," she replied as laconically. She did not at all expect to get it.

He raised his eyebrows.

"Guess I could get along with less of an expert. Not much work. However," he shrugged, "fifteen it is. Want to start now?"

"Certainly." She was delighted.

He asked her name, showed her into a neat little sanctum adjoining, and after he had given her time to shed raincoat and rubbers and plain little hat, rang his bell for her. She promptly presented herself, in a plain little dark-blue dress, her fair hair fluffed instead of straightened by the dampness, mouth gravely sweet above a little cleft chin, and with notebook in hand.

He dictated a long and quite clever letter to a Mrs. Edgerton, who was evidently considering, or whom he was trying to persuade to consider, building a palatial summer home on some lake which Mr. Millard referred to as "blue-depthed and wonderful." When he had

finished, he leaned back and considered her a moment, not, it seemed, disapprovingly. Then, with a slow smile, "That will be all, Miss Hopkins. I hope you won't be too bored."

She couldn't think what he meant until the next day. She had practically nothing to do. Millard came in mornings and gave her two or three generally unimportant letters, looking at her a good deal; then went out to lunch and did not come back. Wilfred, the office boy, read yellow-backs and was inventing a brake for aéroplanes, drawing complicated designs on scandalous amounts of Mr. Millard's stationery, which even Wilfred admitted was "spiffy."

The fact was that Mr. Millard had no clients. His elaborate offices were for bait or show. Lorna wondered with some excitement where he got the money to pay for them and her. Perhaps he had independent means. Perhaps these offices were a blind for some secret and thrilling something. All day she sat and read or sewed, and thought about Arthur Carrington Millard. There wasn't much else to think of. In spite of the paucity of clients, her salary was paid regularly. Before long she was rested, had gained in flesh, bought needed clothes, and there was instilled into her lonely days some vague but oddly inspiring promise.

The daily event was the more or less brief appearance of Millard. She admired him so much, his clothes, his man-of-the-world air, and then—she had a way with him. She began to weave some rose-colored fancies about him.

And then, all of a sudden, he came down one morning bright and early and went to *work*, engaged a couple of draftsmen and put them to work. By the next day the whole office had assumed a serious and businesslike air.

And one afternoon, Wilfred, with a sort of solemn eagerness, announced

to Mr. Millard the presence of Mrs. Vandyke Edgerton and Miss Nina Edgerton.

Lorna saw them enter. Mrs. Edgerton, to Lorna's eyes, was a typical society-play *grande dame*, Miss Edgerton undoubtedly the leading lady. She was a tall, willowy girl, extremely slender without being in the least bony, with dark hair and large, dark eyes; the sort of girl usually described as "stunning." Her clothes were exquisite and costly. Lorna thought her wonderful, and suddenly some nebulous emotion that had been hovering foglike in the back of her consciousness, took shape, and the shape was *jealousy*. Not a positive, fiery, resentful jealousy, just a small, wistful thing that was surprised at itself. Suddenly she realized just how wonderful she thought Arthur, yes, *Arthur*, was; how much she thought of his glances; how much she had dreamed of seeing him every day like this. But how foolish to think that this girl, however lovely, here merely on business, business that meant Arthur's future, need mean anything to him!

It seemed to Lorna that they stayed hours. She could hear "Arthur's" agreeable voice, Miss Edgerton's dulcet laughter, Mrs. Edgerton's questioning inflections, and again Arthur's reassuring and ingratiating response. At last they were ceremoniously ushered out; and she was summoned.

Lorna found her employer in the highest spirits.

"Well," he greeted her, with an air of good comradeship, "we've as good as landed the contract. And it's *some* contract! Now, let's get to work."

It had been four o'clock when the Edgertons left, and it was five-thirty before Millard paused in the important letters that must be got out the first thing in the morning. Lorna, a little flushed, looked up inquiringly.

"This is overtime, Miss Hopkins,

isn't it? I guess the rest can wait until to-morrow." He paused. There was no doubt he saw the very pretty girl before him, rather than a mere stenographer. He saw that he had communicated his own exhilaration to her. It was in her blue eyes, on her parted lips. Pretty little thing! He remembered having thought of her that first morning as "a drenched lily." He saw how much prettier she was now, her fresher color, firmer flesh, more careful dress.

"Let's celebrate," he suggested, smiling. "Won't you dine with me, and we'll take in a play afterward?"

Would she? Will a bee sip clover, or a robin peck a strawberry? "Oh, I—I'd love to, Mr. Millard."

Her radiance made his smile broader.

"All right. Get your hat."

Lorna had only dreamed that such pleasures could be. Her laughter bubbled as they sat in the big restaurant, for he had taken her to one of the showy places. Everything, to her, was in the superlative degree, the music delightful, the food delicious, Arthur Millard the most fascinating of men. She felt a little shy and in awe of him, but she knew that she must not be silent and difficult. She must try to be bright and amusing so that he would not regret bothering with her. It did not for a moment occur to her that the obligation was not wholly on her side. And when she saw that he was entertained, that his eyes did not stray long from her happy little face, and that in them was the look of a man seeing something desirable, her cup was brimming. This, this one night was worth all the discouragement and monotony of her city experience. It dispelled any momentary doubt she had ever had of what might be. Here at last and indeed was the abode of romance!

After dinner they went to the promised play, and her enthusiasm made even Millard say it wasn't half bad.



She admired him so much, his clothes, his man-of-the-world air, and then he had a way with him.

It seemed so wonderful to Lorna that Millard was not carried away. It showed that he had seen everything, done everything, and knew so much that probably only *the very finest things* stirred him at all. He could not guess the final thrill of being sent home in a taxi.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Millard! I just can't tell you what a good time

I've had. I never had such a good time before! Thank you so much! I'll be down early in the morning."

"Awfully glad you liked it all. Maybe there'll be another time. Be good. Good night." He turned away smiling.

No longer was Lorna a lone traveler seeking a lotus land that faded as she advanced now that her small foot was

firmly planted on the precious soil. Magic doors were opened by the wonderful hand of Arthur Millard. Her work became a sort of play, and it was with the sincerest pleasure that she saw the office taking on what she fancied was the atmosphere of great success. Every once in a while the Edgertons came in, and quite often, in his mail, there was a perfumed note bearing the monogram N. V. E. She told herself that neither of these things had any importance. A man of his charm must always be sought after. She *must* trust him.

One day she was surprised to see Wells W. Brown entering the office, and he seemed surprised to see her.

"Why, Miss Hopkins! You here? You're looking fine!"

"Thank you."

"I've been wondering where you were working. Still living at the same place? Thought once or twice I'd call you up, but didn't quite have the nerve." He grinned sheepishly, but his gray eyes searched hers eagerly.

"Why didn't you?" she asked, carelessly pleasant. "Yes, I'm still at the same place."

"Like it here?" he inquired with interest.

"Oh, very much." The words were as warm as a little flame.

"That's nice. I'm glad." But there was nothing hilarious in his tone. "I wanted to see Mr. Millard about this Edgerton business."

"Oh, he's going to build them a *wonderful* house!" she cried.

"Yes? I want to bid on part of the job." She wished he wouldn't keep that penetrating gaze fixed so unwaveringly on her face. "I want to talk to Mil—Mr. Millard a little before I send in my bid."

At that moment Millard came in, greeted Mr. Brown very affably, and Lorna left them in conference. Mr. Brown, Lorna thought, acted a little

queer. He must be more important, too, than she had guessed, to be conferring with *Arthur* about the Edgerton's hundred-thousand-dollar cottage.

It happened that on the evening of this very day, Arthur took Lorna out for the second time. They went this night to an obscure restaurant and to a theater not quite so high class. Not but what Lorna was just as pleased. Arthur said he was tired of the bright lights, and asked whether she would mind if they had theirs a little dimmed for this once. Of course, she didn't. What did anything matter as long as he was sitting opposite her? She did not say that, but her blue eyes did. And he laughed, and said something not exactly tender, unless, unless you wanted to take it that way.

During the next few weeks Millard asked her quite often to dine with him. Sometimes he would excuse himself after their cozy little dinner saying he had a tiresome engagement and would send her happily home in a taxi. Who was she to be exacting? It was so wonderful of him to care about her at all.

Oddly enough, they ran into Wells Brown several times, and Lorna always spoke sweetly. She liked everybody these days.

"Brown a particular friend of yours?" Millard asked once.

"Oh, no." She explained their acquaintance. "He seems an awfully nice fellow. Did he get that contract he was talking to you about?"

"No. His bid was too high." He spoke shortly and they dropped Mr. Brown conversationally.

To do Millard justice he did not make love to Lorna unless you call an occasional pretty speech making love. He spoke of their jolly little friendship, of what a restful, unexact little comrade she was—and raised her to twenty a week.

They were busy at the office. Through his Edgerton commission Mil-

lard had gained several clients. Then, one morning he came down in a black mood. Lorna had never seen him low-spirited before, and she was all sympathy. There was no annoying curiosity nor questioning, only gentleness and the greater effort to keep the smaller annoyances from him.

He let the sun go down on his wrath, too, and Lorna was surprised when, rather grumpily to be sure, he asked her to dine with him. Of course, she consented. Poor fellow! Poor Arthur! Something had gone so awfully wrong for him. She did her very best to cheer him, and finally got him to smile once in a while.

"I tell you," he said, at last, "*you're* the kind of girl a fellow ought to marry."

"Oh, thank you," she said lightly. But her heart was dancing.

This was one of the nights when he sent her home instead of taking her, and Lorna was almost sure she caught a glimpse of Wells Brown as she was getting into the taxi. Queer they were always running into Wells Brown. She forgot him instantly.

What did Arthur mean by saying that? Fancy threw her rosiest cloak around the girl. How romantic it all was! How had she been led to his office that rainy morning? "Two shall be born the whole, wide world apart." Surely Destiny had guided her little wet feet that day! And how handsome he was! Just like a leading man! And here she was, Lorna Hopkins of Sandy Center, riding home in this luxurious car in the great, big city. Arthur was just clasping a string of pearls about her neck as they stood in the drawing-room of their magnificent town house, when the driver jerked open the door. "Here y'are, thirty-seven!"

Arthur wasn't feeling much better in the morning, which was a Tuesday. He gloomed through the week, "snapping at everybody," as Wilfred said.

Lorna moved quickly at his bidding, never resentful, only so sorry. Saturday at five he said, still a little grudgingly: "Well, little girl, you're a brick! You deserve a party. Run home and doll up. We'll do it right this time."

And Lorna, the always agreeable: "That will be just lovely, Ar—Mr. Mil-lard."

All the way home she wondered if she should have said it like that: "Arthur." She practiced the pleasant name in whispers while she did her hair, powdered her charming little face, carefully got into her best frock, which had lured her into a quite terrifying extravagance.

Arthur came for her in a limousine, thrilling her with his dinner jacket, and frightening her with bitter speeches about women of which she did not at all get the relevancy.

Alighting at one of the smartest restaurants, Arthur was very cross because they must wait for a table. While they stood there, she silent, he sulking, she discovered that the young man standing beside her who had come in just behind them was Wells W. Brown, again! Just as she was saying, "We meet often, don't we?" a new party swept in and paused directly in front of them. A middle-aged lady and gentleman and a young woman, Mrs. Van Dyke Edgerton and the stunning Miss Nina.

Miss Nina's glance passed icily over Lorna, hesitated at Arthur, then met his suddenly imploring eyes, relented, smiled the sweetest, faintest smile, of *forgiveness*—it was plain as print—and nodded a graceful little nod of permission. He was instantly at her side, offering his arm, murmuring low, eager words. The middle-aged gentleman evidently had a reservation, for at that moment the head waiter lifted his hand and the now complete party of four passed on into the dining room!

For a second Lorna could not grasp the incredible fact that Arthur had ac-



For a second Lorna could not grasp the incredible fact that Arthur had actually walked off with Nina Edgerton and left her standing there alone.

tually walked off with Nina Edgerton and left her standing there alone. She was quite sure she was going to faint. She felt herself swaying, then a steady, supporting hand under her elbow.

"You're with me, Miss Lorna."

She lifted her dazed eyes to the good, reassuring face of Wells W. Brown.

"Let's sit down here just a minute." He guided her to a divan and they sat down. She tried to say something but no sound came. Mr. Brown, his face

screwed into an angry knot, seemed unable to say anything either. After a moment, however, he spoke. "It's awfully crowded here. 'Fraid we can't get a table. What do you say we move on?"

She managed to say: "All right."

A waiter came up as they rose.

"Mr. Brown?"

"Yes."

"Card from gentleman."

Brown took it, one of Millard's

cards, and Lorna could read the scribbled lines as Brown read them.

Sorry, but just couldn't miss chance. Whole future depending. Be a good fellow and take care of the kid. Forgive

A. C. M.

Lorna's head cleared a little. The "forgive" she felt was for her. Forgive? Never, never, never. And he called her "the kid." Oh!

Brown put the card in his pocket.

"Let's go."

They got into a machine. Lorna thought they were going home, but they just went a few blocks and stopped in front of another less brilliant café.

"I'd rather go home." She held back a little.

"Buck up," advised Mr. Brown. "We've the whole evening yet."

She let him lead her in.

When they were seated he smiled a little, and for the first time she realized how angry he was.

"Don't think I'm so meek," he begged. "But I didn't think it would help to raise a row there. I'll go down tomorrow and lick him right."

Lorna gazed at him wide-eyed, shocked, yet not wholly displeased.

"Don't feel too bad," he went on earnestly. "He's not worth it, the four-flusher! I"—he hesitated—"I've been sort of watching out a little. I was afraid you'd—you'd—" He gave that up. "You see, I happen to know he's been trying his best to capture Miss Edgerton. Got a lot of money, she has. Suppose they had a disagreement or something and she gave him a chance there to-night to fix it, and he took it—the—" He stopped himself.

"I see," said Lorna tonelessly. Then with a little burst of shame: "What did he want to take me for, then?"

Mr. Brown stirred uneasily.

"Oh, well, you—you're a pretty girl, you know." Then impulsively he asked, "He didn't promise you anything, Lorna?"

"Oh, no! It's just that I was such a little fool!"

He said nothing to that. His eyes were on his plate. Something about him made her wonder. "What did you mean, Mr. Brown, by 'watching out'?"

He looked cornered. In fact he blushed, but rushed on desperately. "Lorna, I—I've been crazy about you ever since you came to my uncle's office. I wanted to be friends, but you—you didn't seem to like me much; you didn't encourage me any. And I didn't know just how to go about it. When I found you were with Millard—he thinks he's such a lady-killer—I guess I was kind of jealous or something. I just had to see what he was up to. Will you have some of this celery Victor?"

"If you please," she agreed faintly. She felt a little calmer now, her shame and humiliation somewhat soothed, perhaps because Mr. Brown looked so white and intense. "I should have died if you hadn't been there," she murmured.

"You won't go back to work, will you?" he demanded.

"Of course not."

He brightened.

"If you like, I could go and get anything you have there for you."

"Thank you. But please don't—don't fight, will you?"

"You're not afraid I'd hurt him?"

"It's not that. I just don't want you to fight."

"Just as you say." He was resigned, but disappointed. "Would you like him to apologize in person or—or shall I receive it for you?"

"I never want to see him again," she shuddered.

"I'll receive it for you," said Mr. Brown decisively.

There was a long silence, and they made a pretense of eating. He fidgeted, cleared his throat nervously.

"You—you wouldn't care to work for me, I suppose?"

"Why I—I didn't know you had an office."

"Oh, yes! Guess you didn't think much about me, did you? I'm doing pretty well. I'll try to make it pleasant for you."

"I don't know——"

"If you're thinking about what I said a while ago, I wouldn't bother you with it, honest I wouldn't! Maybe you might like me better after a while."

"You're just lovely to me, I'm sure," she murmured.

"If you'd let me come out to-morrow we might talk it over," he suggested eagerly. She gave him permission. He wanted to go on to a theater but she begged to be taken home.

He looked at her anxiously as she gave him her hand at the door. "You—you're all right? You're not going to feel bad, are you?"

She shook her head.

"You've been awfully kind, Mr. Brown."

But when she stood in her little room, humiliation again engulfed her. Pride had a deep wound but not the bitterest. This was the end of romance. She saw that Millard had meant nothing. Her transparent admiration had amused him; he had used her merely as a stop-gap in his serious affair with the heiress. He had insulted her ruthlessly when self-interest intervened. Youth's bitterest moment is that first one when illusion's bubble is pricked. Lorna sat huddled in the dress she had put on so carefully for him, and thought bitter thoughts of nunneries; of a beautiful man-hater who brought men to her feet only to trample on them; of Arthur Millard eating his heart out in his rich wife's house, seeking always and never finding. Oh, life's all horrid and contrary! Nothing ever comes true! There's no such thing as romance! It's just a

word, a hateful, haunting, alluring word, a promise without fulfillment—and she cried herself to sleep.

Morning brought flowers from Wells Brown, and afternoon a note from Millard. He was terribly sorry, but felt sure she'd *understand*. Of course, he had seen Brown there and knew he would take care of her. He hoped she would reconsider and come back to work. He hoped they'd still be friends. He was sure she would see what a vital moment it was for him. If there was *anything* he could ever do for *her*, he hoped she wouldn't hesitate to call on him. And he begged her to believe him most regretfully and sincerely hers.

Lorna tore the letter slowly to bits. Oh, she understood all right. Romance had lost its case. She guessed she would go to work for Mr. Brown. Nothing mattered. She would never be interested in life again.

Wells tried hard to revive her faith in things, in men. They had awfully good times together. Picnics and excursions, and Wells got a dandy little car just to run around in. And in the winter there were plays and skating and cozy dinners and dancing. Wells was the best old thing, so dependable, and not so bad looking, either. Such nice, *devoted* eyes!

And pretty soon it was spring! Lorna was surprised. Somehow she had thought it was never going to be *spring* any more. But here it was, just as sweet as ever! Robins and wood violets, and the park all green and leafy! She began somehow to think of home—mother rocking on the side porch, easy-going mother who s'posed she should be worried about a little girl in the big city, but wasn't 'cause she *knew* Lorna was just right; and father in his little garden planting sweet peas along the fence.

"I guess I'll go home, Wells," she sighed.

"Go home?" he echoed blankly.

"There's plenty of stenographers. Fanny Green would come."

"You mean for good?"

"Oh, I don't know."

It was Sunday and they were out in the runabout. Wells ran off the road into a lane and stopped the car. He turned to her.

"Lorna, don't you remember what I said to you that first night?"

"What?"

"I—I said I'd always been crazy about you. Don't you remember?"

"Ye-es, I guess so."

"I've tried awfully hard," he said, "to go slow. I've tried to make you care for me, just a little bit, Lorna, much as I love you! I—I *couldn't* believe you'd never forget that—fellow. You *have*," fiercely, "haven't you, darling?"

"I don't remember any fellow," said Lorna faintly.

"Then, don't you think you could stand for me, sweet? Marry me, please! And I'll take you home, little girl!"

Her head somehow got over on his shoulder. He kissed her. After a while she whispered to him. "Oh,

Wells, I'm so happy! I could never love anybody but *you*!"

After they were married they went home to see the folks. Lorna sat one evening on that old front step, watching the moon come up over Sandy Center, and waiting for Wells to come back from the village candy shop. She glimpsed two lovers strolling hand in hand, saw Henry White lingering over Sally Bobb's front gate.

Lorna smiled and hugged her slender knees. She had heard her mother that morning telling Sally's mother how romantic Wells' and Lorna's courtship had been. And here were Sally and Henry, and through an open window she could see little Mrs. Tom Trott putting her baby to bed.

"Isn't it a darling, romantic old town!" sighed Lorna, as she ran to meet Wells. Romance had won its case!

And so, is romance seeing things as they are not, or understanding them as they are? Perhaps it is like heaven, home cooking, and a lot of other things—a state of mind.

TWO JOURNEYS

THE journey we took alone, dear,
Was dreary the whole way through.
I was lonely; the way seemed endless,
And you say it was thus with you.
The mountains were huge and daunting,
The streams were in flood, and cold,
And the long weird wail of the engine
It wakened a hurt untold.

But the journey we took together,
We took it as if in leaps;
There were never such bloom-clad mountains,
Nor streams of such crystal deeps.
The engine sang like a throistle
To echo our humming gay—
Yet those wonderful miles through Eden
O Love, were the selfsame way!

JEANNIE PENDLETON HALL.



On Nature, Love, Reason, and a Few Allied Topics

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Charm and Philters," "Is Love Enough?" etc.

OH, Miss Blank!" cried a little club girl on one of the fresh-air expeditions organized by a city settlement, "I just love nature. It's so refined!"

"Nature" was, at the moment, defined for the sentimental, beauty-loving child as a gentle slope of daisied meadow reaching up to a fringe of dense, green trees, with a cow or two safely behind a fence, and a bland, blue sky embracing the whole scene. And Miss Blank, pleased at the reaction of the little girl to the graceful prospect, did not feel called upon to enlarge on the fact that nature has many aspects, some of them far from refined.

No such reticence shall withhold the pen of this scribe in dealing with the problem presented by a person vastly unlike the young excursionist, who states her situation, including her hopes and fears of nature, thus:

"I have been out of college two years, and for the last eighteen months I have been very happy in thinking myself really launched upon my career. I specialized in chemistry, and I did some very good work in it. What I planned during college and since graduation was this: To keep on with my work, both as a wage-earning proposition and

as scientific research, until I was about thirty-one. That would give me nine years from graduation. By that date I thought I should have made a place for myself in the chemical world which I couldn't lose. I should have established habits of work which could not be easily broken. I should have proved that I regarded my career as something more than a piece of knitting with which to while away the time until I had really something important to do, namely, of course, to marry.

"Thus established, I intended at that age, about thirty-one, to marry. I should know myself and men of the world well enough by that time not to risk the danger of a bad mistake. I looked forward to having two, or at the most three children, and to organizing my existence so that the necessary periods of retirement for the purpose would not utterly wreck my career. I never questioned my ability to put through the scheme. I liked men well enough, but I had never seen one for whose sake I should be willing to overthrow my plan of existence, any more than I should expect a man of purpose and ambition to overturn his plan the instant he fell in love.

"It all began well enough. I obtained,

after some difficulty, the excellent position which I now hold, and after a little while, having demonstrated my ability as a research worker in my profession, I was given a chance in the research laboratory of the firm. I am making good in it, though, of course, any very brilliant and established position exists in the future only.

"And now, if you please—which I, by the way, most certainly don't!—I have fallen in love. I am only twenty-four, and my foot is on the very lowest round of the ladder of professional success. I am very much in love, and as sillily so as—well, as my young sister, who was the silliest bride I ever saw, with not an idea beyond lace doilies and pink ribbons for her lingerie. Merely being in love has had its effect on my work. Marriage, at this time, would utterly ruin it, I am quite sure.

"Now, although I am in love, I have not yet decided to give in to it. I have still sufficient will power and remembrance of my purpose to be able to tell 'him' that I won't marry him, and to send him about his business. Then, after a few months, I could undoubtedly get back my old chemical form and proceed as before this interruption occurred. That is, I could, as far as chemistry is concerned, but I am not certain about the social or human program I mapped out for myself after thirty. If I clamp the lid down upon my emotions now, when they are fermenting and threatening to blow everything sky-high, will nature take her revenge on me by making me, at thirty or thirty-one, a desiccated creature, all chemistry, who wouldn't be interested to go on with the rest of the program?

"How does nature punish the repression of natural instincts? Isn't there, perhaps, something sacred about her voice, something wiser than about the voice of reason? My reason tells me, for example, that the man with whom

I am in love is just an ordinary young man. Our intellectual tastes are not at all alike. Indeed, he doesn't pretend to be strong on intellectual tastes, and I, as I suppose I have shown, am decidedly so. He isn't at all the kind of man my reason would have picked out for me, even at thirty. But doesn't nature, perhaps, know better than I, what I need? Wouldn't we—he and I, I mean—perhaps have more wonderful and gifted children than I should be likely to have, after continuing too long my cold-blooded program? Aren't nature's purposes obscurely benignant, and may we humans not be piling up future miseries for ourselves when we place ourselves in opposition to them?"

There it is again! The clear-thinking, purposeful young woman with the advanced feminist determinations, echoes the little slum child having her first glimpse of out-of-doors and remembering adjectives of laudation. "Refined" was the term employed as the highest praise in the little girl's circle, and "obscurely benignant" prevails in the case of the more sophisticated one. More obscure than benignant, certainly!

What will nature do to the person who thwarts her? Various things, good or bad, according as the person's soul is strong or weak. She will starve to death the man who does not eat enough, and she will kill the man who follows his appetite unrestricted, and this is what most people mean when they talk about "following nature," in the case of painful, lingering, little-understood disease. She will drive to madness the man who persistently refuses to sleep, and she will render mentally and physically torpid, unenterprising, and indolent the man who sleeps too much. There never was any greater nonsense talked than that about nature being a good guide in a world that has long since ceased to be the natural world.

As for those who deny the repro-

ductive instinct, she may have revenge upon them by giving them warped and twisted minds, by narrowing their sympathies, and hardening, as it were, the arteries through which flow all the kindly currents of life. On the other hand, she may fail to do anything with them in the way of revenge, and allow them to take their places among the saints whose names illumine the pages of human history. It depends on the kind of person and on his purpose in denying his instincts. But there is one sure thing in a world of dubieties, and that is that no one ever attained to sainthood by allowing nature to have her way with him.

As for the superior sort of offspring which the young-woman-in-love is trying to persuade herself she may have, as a result of yielding to nature and marrying the young man who isn't her intellectual equal—it is but fond delusion! Didn't they teach her, along with her chemistry, that nature seems vastly more concerned with the quantity than with the quality of her various species? Didn't they ever happen to mention to her that imbeciles are the most fecund of our humankind? Did they never call her attention to the fact that weeds tend to choke out all beneficent growths in a garden? Did she never hear, even, of the law of the attraction of opposites, with the apparent aim of maintaining a safe mediocrity among the peoples of the world? It is a bad thing, apparently, to specialize in chemistry! It keeps a young woman from learning so many other

interesting little facts about the universe in which she dwells!

As for marrying the particular young man of no intellectual tastes but of coercive charm, that is not a natural problem, although the chemist has tried to see it as such. It is a social and an emotional problem, just as is all marrying and giving in marriage in these later days of our civilization. Reason is apparently already whispering to her that there is danger in yielding to the fascination of a person with whom she is not fundamentally congenial. It would be well to give at least as much heed to the voice of reason as she is disposed to give to the siren voice of "nature," whispering nonsense about the sort of babies that might result from the union.

But if, after the words of reason have been duly heard and her counsels weighed, and the whispers of nature have been disposed of with a refutatory "stuff and nonsense," the young chemist can feel that lace doilies and pink lingerie ribbons and the present young man outweigh the reputation of a Madame Curie and honorary memberships in half a dozen scientific societies; and if she desires, above all, life with the judiciously chosen husband and the carefully computed "two or at the most three" babies in the next decade, she will be pretty safe in marrying him. She will have demonstrated that it is not nature, the perfectly indifferent, which instructs her, but love. And that is quite another and a better and a higher instructor!



Mrs. Martin's Perceptions

By Ed Cahn

Author of "On the Old Dundas Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

How a woman, wiser and bigger than most of us, met a crisis in her married life.

BRADDICK MARTIN threw down his book, looked at the rich brown, brocaded walls of his living room as if they were the bars of a most hideous prison, and walked nervously to the window. He stood there clutching the lace of the curtain in one hand and gazing out upon the exquisitely kept strip of garden separating the house from the street. Its perfection brought no sense of pleasure to him; rather, it added just one more note of irritation to his mood. He was sick unto death of perfect order, entire seemliness.

"Caged!" he muttered, and added, as he saw the figure of his wife approaching down the street, "and there's absolutely no way out!"

Mrs. Martin was coming home from her Tuesday-afternoon club on foot because the doctor had told her that if she objected to weighing any more she must do more walking. From then on she walked. She was by no means stout either, but it was like her to see a disagreeable thing coming far enough away to head it off. Mr. Martin supposed some people considered her attractive. She did carry her fine figure very well and there was a certain brisk snappiness to her whole finely groomed appearance.

But she was so deadly sensible, so matter of fact, so killingly efficient, that there never was anything unexpected in what she did. Her life was ordered like a time-table. Her beau-

tiful house was as comfortable as some fine hotel, and its attractions as unobtrusive and as never-failing. There never was the slightest creak in the domestic machinery. Her servants stayed with her, her tradesmen never cheated her; nothing ever broke or failed to be delivered in time. Katherine herself always seemed to have plenty of leisure for her outside interests. She was a perfect wife, Braddick told himself, admirable in every imaginable way, and yet he longed, with the whole strength of his being, to get away from her.

It wasn't that he hadn't loved her, for he had, with a passionate fervor that he remembered now, in the cold blood of his discontent, with positive wonder. He had changed, that was all. He could no longer be fascinated by a woman whose every move he could predict.

His glance fell upon old fat Roscoe out there weeding the border. Katherine would wait until she got within four paces of him and then she would nod her gracious head and smile as she said, "How'do, Roscoe." She would let herself in with her own key, after touching the bell twice lightly, to let Norah know that she was home. She did not believe in making a servant take any unnecessary steps. She would go straight upstairs and change to house clothes, for, although it was no longer necessary, she was very careful of her clothes.

She did exactly as her husband expected, and as he watched her from behind the concealing lace at the window he wondered how any human being could look so serenely content with the respectable humdrum that was choking the very soul out of him.

He threw himself morosely into a chair and listened with a critical scowl to her light yet decisive footfalls ascending the polished stairs. He thought of a different tread, quick, airy as thistledown in a breeze, pattery as a child's, with no damned efficient decision in it.

He caught his unruly thoughts up short.

"Gad! I'm getting into a bad way over this. I've got to get over it, that's all! Anything else wouldn't be fair to Katherine. She's been mighty good, mighty loyal, and she's helped to make what we've got. There are the kids, too—be sort of rough on them."

He wondered if many other men found themselves in his position, if they felt any of the revolts and longings that he did. He tried to consider himself as an outsider would do. He was barely forty-eight and looked nearer thirty-eight. His health was perfect. Most of the fellows of his age whom he knew looked and felt older, were ripe candidates for the shelf, or sick or something. But he, why he felt all the bounding health of a boy! Who was the chap that said somewhere that virtue was a matter of health, anyway? Well, that was a digression.

Here he was, more of a financial success than any of the boys that he had started life with. He had given his wife everything she had ever wished for, had married his daughter well, and had sent his son to college where he would be safe for three years more. He had done his full duty to them all. What made it a crime for him to want something for himself, now that he could afford it, now that he wanted it?

It seemed to him that he would be young forever, but he supposed that, after all, he was like the rest of the human family, that at best he would have only a few more years of real youth and capacity to enjoy and to live to the full. Until now, his road had been all uphill. This first breathing space seemed to be, by the irony of the high gods, only to show him what he had missed in his toilsome past life, what he was to be denied in the dull, dull future.

He must go on being exemplary and ordinary and damned dutiful until he got bald and feeble, and people got up to give him seats, and finally he would totter into the grave. There'd never be any light or color or love for him because—

Katherine came into the room. She had on, just as he expected, her dark-blue dress that had been "best" last winter and the slippers that were getting a wee bit shabby. Her hair, which was graying around the temples, was coiffed low over her ears in a way that was most becoming. Katherine made a study of her appearance, just as she did of everything else that touched her or her family, and the results were always happy.

If there was a fault to find it was that she was too perfect, that never a stray lock blew in the breeze, never a pin was loose. There was nothing flyaway about Mrs. Martin, nothing left to chance.

"Why, hello, Braddy," she said with a smile that revealed her strong-looking white teeth. "Not another headache, I hope?"

"No. Thank you, Katherine. I knew there was no need of my going back to the office after lunch. Things, with Wallett in charge, just about run themselves now."

"Wallett is invaluable," she answered.

She sat down in the corner of the

Chesterfield and began to embroider an initial in a handkerchief. He noticed her rather large hands, as white as the linen. It was a good many years since he had kissed those hands in the old loverlike way, and again he could not imagine himself in the mood to do it.

"Not smoking, Braddy, and not reading? Norah tells me you have been here all afternoon. Do you know"—she raised her fine brown eyes, that sometimes looked so absent, to his face gravely—"you have not been yourself for quite a long time? Don't you think



"I never meant that you should know, Katherine, but now that you do—well—it alters things. Will you give me my freedom?"

Her face, as it bent over the embroidery hoop, was so calmly placid.

He knew her every thought. She was thinking now that Walter would not half appreciate the needlework she was putting into his handkerchiefs, but that nevertheless her boy must have the best that she could do. She had no glimmer of an idea of the volcano that was seething in her husband's breast, and because he owed her everything, she never would have an idea.

that you ought to tell me what the trouble is?"

To his consternation he felt the blood mounting to his face. He stammered in his surprise at her discovery of a trouble that he had taken such pains to conceal; of which he had only recently admitted the existence. He knew that his voice sounded queer as he said: "You're imagining things! It's nothing. Business bothers, that's all."

"No, my dear, it's more than noth-

ing and it's not business! It's not about Ethel and Bob and not about Walter. It's something, Braddy, about you! Just forget, please, that I am Katherine Martin. Think of me as Katherine Anybody-else-in-the-world and tell me what is wrong."

He bit his lips and stared at her from beneath knitted brows.

"Does my being your wife automatically exclude me from your confidence? Why on earth can't we forget that legal contract for once and be friends?"

"Haven't we always been friends?"

"Oh, yes, at least after we left off being lovers. We have been chums and teammates and parents—almost every combination that two people can be in twenty-six years of married life. And we've managed to get along pretty well. Now that we've made our fortune and disposed of the children for the next few years we ought to be as happy as larks! But you're not! There's something in your heart that you're afraid to show me."

Surprise unloosed his tongue before caution could intervene.

"Oh, Katherine, it would kill you! I—I haven't got the heart!"

Her sober lips curved in a sweet, indulgent, almost maternal smile, and he stopped. He knew her so well! She could never understand these complexities of a man's soul; she would never believe; and he could not hurt her.

"Haven't the heart to tell me that you are tired of me? That there is another woman in your life now and you wish you were free?"

"You know!"

"No, not until this moment, Braddy, but I suspected. There are always little evidences and some stray shreds of gossip that reach one. You've fallen in love, haven't you?"

"She is so young and—and gay—Katherine! She is like—I don't know

what has happened to me—I don't forget that I'm married to you, that I owe you everything! You've been so good! You *are* so good! It's rotten hard on you, Kathie! You can't help it! You've done everything for me and stood by me like a rock. I don't forget I loved you too, once, but—but not like this. This is a fever, a madness, a burning that I have fought and fought and fought!"

"Does she know about it?"

Martin flushed, turned away, and finally nodded. He knew that he could not endure to look at the pain that admission would bring into her face. It was so still that they could hear a coal dropping in the grate.

"I never meant that you should know, Katherine, but now that you do—well—it alters things. Knowing it, you couldn't go on in the old way and neither could I. Will you give me my freedom?"

He forced his eyes back to hers, struck, in the midst of all his seething emotions, with wonder at her marble-like calm. She was a trifle paler than usual, but there was not a trace of disturbance on her face.

It crossed his mind that she meant to argue the question with the same sweet appeal to his reason and his sense of justice that she would use with Ethel and Walter. Perhaps she meant to remind him that they did not believe in divorce; that for the children's sake, if not for hers, he must destroy this thing. But presently she answered:

"Yes, Braddy, I will."

A flood of grateful relief swept over him. She wasn't going to try to avoid the inevitable. The terrible confession was over. There was to be no painful scene, no lamentations nor supplications. With her unfailing good sense she accepted the situation.

"Thank you, Kathie, thank you! Why, you angel, I never dared to dream—to hope that you——"

"Braddy, I'm sorry that you have ever forgotten for a moment that my happiness is in seeing you happy. That is what love means to me! And now, since we are going to part, let's arrange about things."

"Very well, that's the sensible thing—only I haven't thought—Have you any suggestions to make?"

Martin felt a great relief and the cold rigidity of his limbs departed.

Katherine appeared to consider while she folded up her work.

"Yes, one or two suggestions, I think. First, nothing must be said about this to the children."

"All right. I can say that I am going away for a rest. But they have got to know some time."

"True, though when you've got your divorce will be soon enough. I suppose you will be going to Reno? That's the quickest, I understand."

"Unless you'd rather go?"

"No."

"Then I will. It won't make any talk to—to hurt you. Everybody knows I've been going to look over the Nevada properties for a long time. Wallett was saying only yesterday that somebody would have to go pretty soon."

She nodded as if pleased at the circumstance.

"About money, now, Kathie. The house is yours and also that little bunch of bonds. I'll increase them to be worth a hundred thousand. That satisfactory?"

"Quite. If you like, I'll keep an eye on Wallett while you are away."

"Thanks; don't care if you do. He's reliable, but it won't do any harm."

Mrs. Martin touched the bell at her elbow and when Norah appeared said:

"Tell Maggie that as Mr. Martin is dining out to-night, she need not make that meringue but just have the fruit for dessert."

When the maid had gone she rose.

"We've covered everything, I believe. You will want to pack," she said holding out her hand, "so—as I sha'n't be seeing you again, probably—good-by, Braddy."

Her superb poise fairly staggered him. He took her hand, expecting that its icy coldness would give the lie to her brave manner, but it was as warm and vital as ever.

"By," he stammered, and watched her walk out of the room with her usual leisurely step. It seemed as if he ought to thank her or to say something more, but no words came to him and he let her go.

He heard her at the telephone as he went upstairs and later, when he departed, bag in hand, he could tell from the sounds that Norah was serving her dinner.

He looked back at the house once. The amber light was streaming from the dining-room windows; lazy smoke curled from the huge, rough chimney; the pale gleams of the young moon fell upon the timbered gables, and off toward the rosery he caught a glimpse of Katherine's sundial. It was a beautiful little place. Well, she hadn't seemed to mind his leaving her much and so he could go to his happiness with a clear conscience. He drew in a deep breath of the keen air and swung off like a boy to a tryst.

It was as though a thick veil descended then to cover all his old life, shutting out all sight and all sound, almost all memory of it. To say that he never once thought of the years he had spent with his wife would be an exaggeration, but the few thoughts he did have of her and of his son and daughter were so accidental and so easily forgotten that they did not count.

He left town at once, glad in every fiber that he need not be delayed an hour in the stale old scene he was so tired of, that he could begin the pilgrimage toward his happiness immedi-



He saw her as the train drew in, the center of a lively, laughing group.

ately. He exulted that he was not yet too old to enjoy the full flavor of life and yet old enough and wise enough to extract the last drop. He was grateful to fate for his happy and honorable release, for his health, for love, and for Fanette.

Fanette! who had changed the world from a dull place where one piled up money and got home to dinner on time to a dim, fragrant, whispering garden wherein she danced like a firefly from rose to rose, the moonbeams glistening in her high-piled, golden curls!

She was the very spirit and embodiment of youth, and in her all his ideas of beauty and of deathless charm seemed expressed to a degree beyond perfection.

He had seen her first at the theater,

and from the moment that she whirled out of the wings and danced to the edge of his box, from the moment she met his kindling gaze with her searching azure eyes and he read, shining in them like a beacon, the message that he could mean all to her that she meant to him, dated his discontent with life as it was. From that instant began his longings and his struggle.

It was more than love at first sight with Braddick Martin. It was the last, vehement demand of the youth in him for love, the love that is all starshine, all poetry and music and breathless, ungrudging, mad abandon, with no memory of past nor fear of morrow.

They met and she flung open with sure, young hands the door of his imprisoned youth. She exiled the staid

man of affairs and all his duties and concerns with him, releasing a god—or was it rather a merry faun who would feast upon the delights that man, possessing, has rarely the wit or the courage fully to enjoy.

He, Braddick Martin, had the courage and he meant to make up for the gray decades when he had been only half alive. Love now, and warmth and pleasure! He thought now only of Fanette with her gay laugh, her twinkling toes, her supple body, her eyes in which there seemed to lurk the answer to the riddle of the ages—those wonderful, life-giving eyes that made his heart beat and sent the blood storming through his veins.

He and she would stop all the clocks now and tear up all the calendars. They'd wander like gypsies and love like gods!

They had made no plans, of course. It was just the pleasure of kindly destiny that Fanette should already be in Reno, that he could address his glorious news to her there by telegraph, and all the long miles across country dream of her waiting for him on the platform when his train arrived.

Fanette, in the folly of her inexperience, had married her first manager, a good creature but as unappreciative of the needs of a fine, complex nature as Katherine herself.

Braddick looked forward to a happy haze of delightful days with her while they waited for the legal wheels to revolve in their behalf and set them free to contract new bonds. There would be no uneasy qualms of conscience on either side, for Fanette's husband was so blind to her perfections that he had made no objections to their parting.

Braddick spent the last, hot hours that separated him from her in a fever of joyful anticipation. He was sure that Fanette was in a similar exalted state, that already she paced the platform and strained her eyes to the

mountains which infolded that crawling engine, oblivious of everything in the world but that he was coming to her and that he was hers.

He saw her as the train drew in, the center of a lively, laughing group, mostly male, from which she did not withdraw until he was coming down the platform toward her.

She was so beautiful, so dainty, so chic; she smiled so archly; and yet, though he held out his hands to her like a man entering the portals of paradise, he had seen that she turned away from her new friends with a trace of reluctance; had sensed—and he was generally the reverse of intuitive—that she was not altogether pleased with his actual arrival. He realized that he was seeing the first particle of guilt falling from the lovely wings of his butterfly sprite and he resolved so to handle his fragile treasure that there would be no further loss.

In that endeavor he spent all his hours and all his thoughts. Never did mortal, grasping the ideal, strive harder to keep it perfect. And still, the thick, muffling curtain that had so noiselessly descended to cut him off from the old, genial, ordinary Braddick Martin and his ancient world began, after a few short weeks, to rise again.

He looked back at himself as he had been with a sort of wonder. Suddenly his new self was strange to him and irksome. He looked back at his home, and all the dear insignificances of the life that had used to revolve around it thronged back to haunt him with suggestions of the content and the comforts that this strange land denied him. He missed his old occupations, the children, the comfortable round of his old thoughts.

This new Braddick Martin who went straining after impossible delights seemed an ass, and he marveled at him for believing for an instant that the theatrical unreality of an impression of

fairlylike, magical, youthful loveliness could survive unspoiled the light of days in a divorce mill; could be proof against the accidents of time and temper which wear the bloom off every peach.

He began to ask himself in a sharp, judicial voice what he was doing there, and hard on the heels of that sensible inquiry, he purchased a ticket home.

On the train, once more a thousand devils descended upon him, devils that would naturally afflict the old Braddick and devils that knew best how to torment the new. Fanette faded out of his mind like the mirage of some mysterious fever and Katherine, grave, kindly Katherine, with her serene brow and quiet eyes, came back to take her place like a reality that, once lost sight of, is trebly treasured on being found again.

He had not heard from her, of course. Wallett conducted the business admirably and sent regular reports. His letters gave no hint that he knew of any impending change in Martin's private affairs, mentioning, quite incidentally, Mrs. Martin's occasional visits to the office. Braddick had heard from his son and from his daughter, fresh from her honeymoon. She hoped that she and her Bob could manage to be as happy as he and mother had been. Clearly, Katherine had not told them. Was it because she had hoped that he might change his mind?

He might have extracted some comfort from that thought but for the vivid recollection of her lack of emotion when he had left her. She had not minded. Why, she had shown an almost indecent haste in agreeing that they must part; had seemed anxious to have him go. Now that he was in his right mind again and stopped to think about it, he saw that she was indifferent to him.

She was very proud, and the knowl-

edge that he wished to be free of her had doubtless turned the indifference that she had so considerably concealed into something very like loathing. He was certain that she could never forgive him.

And yet, since the pretty house on Iroquois Road held all in the world that was precious to him now, he went straight to it from the train.

"It's home," he muttered, straining his eyes for the first sight of it, aware that suspense was suffocating him.

He let down the window of his taxicab and breathed in the frosty air. Overhead the stars gleamed coldly. Katherine was like them; pure, aloof, bright, perfect; with never the warmth to lead her into mad follies of the flesh; fixed in her proper orbit, without a ghost of a desire to wander from it. Though he wanted her again with all his soul he could still see her blessed limitations. She had no cursed imagination to set her wandering as his did him. She was content with her lot always and—

There was the house now, the bare limbs of the elms behind it standing out against the sky line like a huge lace fan. Snow powdered the roof and loaded the window ledges and was banked high on either side of the broad path that led to the door. Braddick was conscious of greeting each clump of shrubbery in one swift glance around, and then his eyes fastened on the warm light streaming out over the snowy lawn from the living-room windows.

He got out of the cab, leaving his bag inside, and told the man to wait.

"I'll be going back to town pretty soon, I think."

Then, after a moment's dread of the issue, he walked up the path and gave the bell the three quick rings with which he had been wont to announce himself, inserted his key in the lock, and went inside.

It was very quiet and warm and homelike. The dignified beauty of the hall struck him first, a masterpiece that he had not fully appreciated until now. A great mass of yellow roses filled the copper bowl and shed their golden glow over the ebony hall table. In the corner the clock ticked sociably.

"This is where I belong," he thought. Just then his wife appeared at the door of the living room, her finger marking a place in a book whose covers made a crimson splash against the creamy whiteness of her dress.

Now was the time to say something, but his agitated tongue was paralyzed in his mouth; his throat closed so tight that he could not even gasp.

He was prepared for his deserts; icy courtesy, sarcasm, even ironic triumph. He stood there before her rooted to the floor, flushed, miserable, almost gulping in an agony of embarrassed supplication. He knew that her inquiring look meant that she expected him to speak; knew also that she saw that he could not, and that she was too kind to refuse to put him at his ease.

The wraith of a smile flitted across her face.

"I thought those three sharp rings couldn't mean anybody but you, Braddy. Put down your things and come in. I've a fire."

Her voice held no note of animosity, but was as exquisitely modulated and unhurried as of old, and his ears, used to glittering staccato, were grateful for the change.

He put his hat down on the table, slid out of his coat, and followed her. She sat down in her accustomed corner and he sank into his easy-chair.

"I'm glad to see you again, Katherine," he heard his clumsy tongue begin.

"Are you? I'm glad! I'm glad to see you, too."

"Are you, really?" he asked eagerly.

"Honest and truly!"

She laughed, and after a few moments said:

"Are we going to talk like Hiram and Susan at Punkin Corners? Let's don't be shy with each other just 'cause we've parted! We're still friends, I hope! Well, and how did it go?"

"It didn't go."

"Is that so?"

He nodded.

"Fact is, Katherine, I was an ass ever to think it would. It couldn't!"

"You mean you changed your mind, or that you were disappointed?"

"Both. And mistaken in the first place."

Her interested eyes invited him to confess but her lips were as still as marble. He looked at her and wondered at the fool that had once been so mad as to think her tiresome. Why, she was all things desirable and as generous as a man. But he did not deceive himself about her attitude toward him now; he knew her too well for that.

She was and always would be his friend, interested in his destiny and in his adventures, but he and the years that had passed since they were young lovers had removed his image from her heart, and the shrine was forever closed now to the fallen idol. He could come all he pleased to the outer galleries, but the holy of holies was forbidden.

He realized it. He did not blame her, and yet the regret that pierced him was very poignant. To stifle it, to keep from begging forgiveness on his knees, he launched headlong into an incoherent torrent of explanations. Words added to words. He was scarcely conscious of what he was saying.

"She was not all just joy and thistledown—grossness unimaginable—a tawdry mind—but not her fault. She'd not had a good environment—like a weed one thinks is a flower because he's not known the species before—appall-



His agitated tongue was paralyzed in his mouth; his throat closed so tight that he could not even gasp.

ing ideas—the misery of discovering that what you thought was gold—not even— Oh, Lord, Kathie, it's almost comic that a man could live to be forty-eight and not be disillusioned until— And then to know he's hashed things forever in the process—the things he really cares about! Lost his kids and his home and—

A big lump in his throat shut off his words. He clenched his hands and bowed his head.

"What makes you think you have lost them? Have you told them about your divorce?"

He winced at the ease with which she used that dreadful word.

"No."

"Then they don't know. Nobody does here, for I've seen to it myself."

"I'm glad, Katherine, for I'm not getting a divorce. I don't want one!"

She leaned over and took his hand. "I thought it was possible that you might come and tell me that."

He clasped her free hand tight and his eager eyes were alight with dawning though incredulous hope. Could she be meditating a supreme revenge? Did she mean to learn of his repentance and then damn him to outer darkness forever? No woman born of woman could be as liberal, as generous as she seemed. She must be jealous down under that superb surface of hers. She must have suffered, if only in pride. She must long for a human vengeance.

"Do you know, Braddy, I fancy I can read your thoughts!"

"I hope not!" he said hastily.

"Anyway, stop looking so miserable and as though you're afraid of me. I assure you I have no dagger concealed about me."

"You don't hate me?"

"Bless you, no!"

"You're not angry?"

"No."

"You're not hurt?"

"Not any more."

"Y-you—Katherine, do you forgive me?"

"Not exactly. You see, I have never blamed you, so there isn't any question of forgiveness between us."

She sat and smiled her tender, amused, little smile and watched her words sink in. His joyful bewilderment was apparent.

"Braddy, can I never convince you inside of a thousand years that the thing that matters to me most is your happiness, and that I am willing and glad to do anything to secure it? If another woman can make you happy, why then I want her to have you. But if she fails and you think I may do after all——"

He never let her finish, for his hungry arms reached out and gathered her in.

Afterward he held her away from him and looked into a face all rosy with his kisses, a beautiful face with merry eyes.

"I love you, *love* you! You wonderful, glorious woman, you! I could hug you to death! But, Kathie, how can you be so good?"

"Well, Braddy——" she said softly and nestled closer in his arms. Dear woman! He knew her so well! She would take a long breath before she went on.

She did, and he brushed her fragrant hair with his lips and reflected that a man can't live with a woman twenty-six years and not know her mind

through and through. He knew just what she would say, just how she would have figured out her duty toward him, just how dearly she loved him, just how much she believed that she must never fail him. She was a woman of sympathy and understanding, though being a woman, of course, she could not realize the depth and strength of man's primitive urgings.

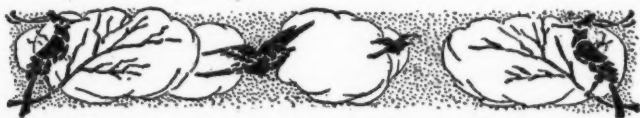
He had already forgotten that he had ever had any doubts as to the state of her mind about him, but the wee smile around her lips told him that she was reading his thoughts again, that far back in her brain she was not quite pleased at her being taken for granted and smiled over. But she went on with her answer.

"It isn't goodness, Braddy. I just realize that men wish to roam now and then and that it's quite natural if not entirely lawful. I know there is youth and beauty in the world, dearest, and I don't blame you for seeing them. I can't hate you for wanting them! I remember that love goes where he likes and that laws are not made for him."

"Jove, Katherine! You are magnificent! How did you find out all this?"

Mrs. Martin looked up at him, her eyes alight with an expression which in some odd way was entirely new to him. She searched his face as if she wondered whether to be quite frank or whether to keep her own counsel. Then, with a shrug so slight that it scarcely stirred the lace over her shoulders, she seemed to decide that he, in his turn, could stand a shock.

"My dear, I have so often felt that impulse toward change, myself, that remembering it, I could sympathize with you!"



Salvage

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Belinda and the Red Terror," "At Blimmer's," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

Miriam was a girl who just had to be rescuing, saving some one. The story of her love and marriage is an unusual one.

WHEN Miriam's wide, studious, comprehensive gaze first lighted upon John Gilmore, he was sitting at a card table in the Stevens' library, shaking dice with Maisie Greer. It was the vivid prettiness of Maisie, small, slight, brilliantly brown and rose, with slim, white shoulders gleaming out of an opalescent cloud of chiffon, that had first attracted Miriam's eyes, but, traveling from the girl with her ever-growing pile of little silver coins to the man from whom she was winning them, they remained fixed. She had never, she thought, seen a finer face than this man's, as far as nature's intention went, or one more spoiled by dissipation. It had the pasty pallor of the habitual heavy drinker to whom alcohol is a bleach, not a rouge. His eyes, very blue beneath a somewhat beetling, square forehead, were bloodshot, and there were dark, flabby pouches beneath them. His thick, straight, mouse-colored hair, a strong contrast to his black eyebrows, stood upright in little tufts where he had run his fingers through it. But it was at his hands especially that Miriam looked.

They, too, were white, the hands of a man who practiced no outdoor sport or occupation. They were not yet touched by the flabbiness that had begun to mar his face. They were still sinewy, strong. They had the long fingers of the artist, and a slant from

wrist to knuckles which an artist might have liked to mold. It seemed to Miriam, with her strong, positive ideas of values, almost sacrilegious that such hands should be engaged in such an occupation as tossing dice and pushing dimes and quarters across the linen-covered card table for the rapacious little claws of Maisie Greer to gather in. She turned to her host, Frank Stevens, circulating among his guests hospitably and even more elegantly than he did in the drawing-room comedy whose long run in New York had placed him temporarily among its most opulent citizens, and asked abruptly:

"Who is he?"

"Who is who?" Stevens drawled in his slow, pleasant English voice. Then he caught the direction of her intent look, and went on, "Oh, you mean Gilmore—John Gilmore? Haven't you ever met him?"

"No. What does he do? I mean when he isn't losing money to some attractive little harpy."

"Maisie does have wonderful luck," commented Stevens. "If she could only act, now, as well as she can gamble, the companies which she honors with her presence would be better off."

"But this Gilmore, who is he? An actor, too?"

"No. He's a painter. That is, he was a painter, and a very promising one, I believe. But I don't think he's been doing any work lately. Merely

hitting the high spots. Too bad, too bad!"

"If you think you could ever win him away from his present occupation, I should like to meet him," said Miriam.

Frank Stevens looked up at her with sudden, sharp attention.

"I should have thought him the last person in the world to attract your favorable attention, my dear Miriam," he said. "He hasn't a thing to recommend him except his good looks, and he won't have those long if he keeps on at the rate he's going. He's really—well, I oughtn't to talk against one of my own guests, but I don't think we should have him here—at any rate not when we have highly respectable young ladies like you. He'll do among vagabonds and mummies, perhaps. But hardly, even there. He's really dropped out of decent circles, and it's only because Grace is such a soft-hearted creature that he is here to-night. You know her habit of inviting all and sundry to her evenings.

"She met Gilmore on Broadway this afternoon, hadn't seem him for years, and was so moved by his tale of his down-and-outness that she made him promise to come here to-night. When I heard it, I rebuked her. I even enlightened her in regard to a few matters of which she was in ignorance. I pinned my hope, however, to the likelihood of his forgetting all about the engagement before evening. He didn't, though, and here he is, a disreputable wolf among our lambs."

"The lamb with whom he is occupied at present seems extremely well-equipped for playing with wolves," rejoined Miriam dryly as Maisie, with a shrill little laugh of triumph, raked in the last quarter in Gilmore's pile.

"I shall have to walk home to Ninth Street," Gilmore told her. "You haven't left me even car fare. And, worse still, the game will have to stop, unless you would care to put your pile against my

cuff buttons." He showed the beautifully matched scarabs, set in platinum, which fastened the soft, rumpled cuffs of a shirt not too immaculate. He was in a sack suit, not recently pressed.

Maisie looked at the cuff links with interest. She made a movement to sweep the little pile of her winnings back upon the board again, but Frank Stevens laid a warning finger upon her.

"Not here," he said. "You can't do it here, Maisie. There must be a limit to the rooking of guests by other guests under this virtuous roof-tree. Do the decent thing; give Gilmore a nickel to take him down on the subway, or even a dime for his bus fare, and let it go at that."

Maisie laughed, sighed, and reluctantly swept the pile of her earnings into her gold mesh bag.

"I'll do better than that," she said. "I'll give Mr. Gilmore a lift down. Did you know I'd bought a little sedan, and that I run it myself? I've been fined twice for breaking the traffic laws already," she added proudly.

"Do you mention it as an inducement to Gilmore to accept your hospitable offer?"

She laughed again, her gay, thrilling, absent-minded laugh. Already she was looking around the room, her fingers automatically closing over the dice shaker, in search of some one else to take Gilmore's place at the little table. Gilmore rose to his feet, and Miriam, at Frank Stevens' elbow, saw how tall and well-proportioned he was, how magnificent a man nature had intended him to be. But there was an indolent sagging of his neck and shoulders, a presage of thickening at his waist. The smooth-shaven lips, too, that must once have been of a chiseled firmness, were a little loose, the jaw losing its clean-cut outline.

"Frank," she reminded her host, "I'm here. Don't you remember I asked you to present Mr. Gilmore to me?"

"Mark the persistency of the female of the species, Gilmore," said Stevens in burlesque resignation. "I told this young woman that you were not for the likes of her, that you were a bold, bad buccaneer, but she wouldn't be warned. Her fate be on her own head! Miss Eldridge, Mr. Gilmore."

Unconsciously Gilmore straightened to acknowledge the introduction. There was something in the fine, proud sweep of Miriam's tall body, something in the earnest directness of her hazel eyes, that prompted a response, a sort of competition in gallantry of carriage.

"Thank you very much, Miss Eld-

Frank, too," she added, smiling upon her host who hovered protectingly and a little anxiously near her. "I don't do anything. That is, nothing except a little settlement work."

"Ah, yes, settlement work," repeated Gilmore vaguely. "Uplift and all that sort of thing?"



Maisie, with a shrill little laugh of triumph, raked in the last quarter in Gilmore's pile.

ridge," he said, "for not allowing this old scandalmonger here to do me out of the privilege of meeting you. Are you also one of the lights of the stage? I suppose I ought to know, but I haven't seen much of the legitimate for the past three or four years."

"Oh, no, I don't act. I'm merely a friend of Grace Stevens—and of

"It sounds impertinent, doesn't it?" Miriam's voice was clear and bell-like, her smile frank and charming. "Meddlesome, prying, conceited? Well, I suppose it is. But I don't think the people with whom we meddle resent us often, or, at any rate, long."

"I shouldn't think that the people with whom *you* meddle," Gilmore

stressed the pronoun, "would ever feel any resentment. "It wouldn't be resentment one would feel to find an— an—"

"Come on out into the dining room, Gilmore" urged Frank Stevens. "The last bottle of genuine Scotch is out there. The stuff they've been selling lately isn't the real at all."

"You're mistaken about two things, Frank," the other man answered. "The first is that Scotch could possibly lure me away from Miss Eldridge, as long as she will let me stay, and the second is that there is any real shortage of that life-giving fluid, provided one knows where to look for it and has the price to pay for it."

Miriam had listened to the invitation with a little look of arrest, almost of trepidation, on her face. She drew a breath of relief at Gilmore's reply, and, smiling radiantly, moved to the window seat that filled the big bay window, looking out across Riverside Park to the Hudson.

"I'm glad you're not going out to drink his horrid Scotch," she said, with that outspoken honesty, utterly lacking in coquettishness, which characterized her.

"I'm glad you're glad, Miss Eldridge." Gilmore dropped upon the cushioned settee beside her. They fell into animated talk while Frank Stevens made his way through the rooms in search of his wife.

"I wish you would look at what you have done," he said, when he had succeeded in finding her and detaching her from the people with whom she was talking. "Miriam Eldridge is in the other room on the window seat with Gilmore, and they are talking like a house afire. How do you suppose that Dr. Eldridge will feel, and her mother, when they learn that she has met that thoroughgoing wastrel at our house?"

Grace stepped to the door and looked across an intervening room to the one

in which the two were sitting. She got only the back of their heads. Their faces were turned away. They were looking out into the beauty and mystery of a white winter night, upon the Palisades.

"Oh, it will be all right," she reassured her husband. "Miriam will never see him again. Dr. Eldridge has never heard of him, I'm sure, or Mrs. Eldridge, either, I dare say. You forget, darling, that people like the Eldridges do not keep in touch with all the scandals of your bohemian crowd."

"Don't try to foist Gilmore on to my shoulders, or call him one of my crowd. I didn't ask him to come to the house. Furthermore, I wouldn't have asked him to come to the house, even had I happened to be the one to meet him. Not on a night when there were other people, anyhow. Gilmore is too likely to have done them out of their money or their wives, to make it safe."

"I am sorry I did it," murmured Grace contritely. "But, truly, dear, you couldn't have helped feeling sorry for him, yourself. He looked so shabby, so aimless. He said he hadn't seen any of the old crowd for years, that he guessed people were pretty well sick of him, and oh, I couldn't help it!"

"Well," said Frank, patting her affectionately and looking half admiringly, half amusedly, at her plump, troubled face, "don't let it happen again. That's all! And be sure to let Miriam Eldridge know all the malodorous details of his career. Don't let the child go away with any romantic notion about him."

"I'll tell her enough," Grace promised, nodding her head. "She won't have a single illusion left about him by the time I'm through."

The opportunity for illumination did not come that night. Miriam Eldridge and John Gilmore sat upon the window seat and talked, oblivious of all about them. Singers sang and pianists

played. A violinist whose performances were crowded with hysteric ladies in the habit of surging on to the stage for the privilege of kissing his hand, drew from his instrument such strains as he never drew in public, and Miriam never even heard him. Groups wandered back into the dining room, where one of Grace Stevens' quite famous little buffet suppers was spread, and still the two sat and talked. Frank Stevens brought other men up to introduce to Miriam—an English actor-manager, last of the great race, a surgeon, bronzed and lean from service in France, and accounted a famous raconteur, the long-haired playwright of a "little" theater. Miriam's attitude toward the great was that of one greater still. She seemed to wave them away, as adults wave away persistent children. Then Stevens tried in vain to drag Gilmore off. He wanted to present him to the ample lady of ample fortune whose passion was for having her portrait painted.

"Good heavens, Stevens! Let us alone, can't you?" was Gilmore's impatient response to his friendly offer. "I don't do portraits, and never did. Photography and flattery don't interest me, and those are the only arts your portrait painter has to study."

"But our dear Mrs. Gotcash," persisted the tireless host, "has houses and lands in many beautiful spots on the earth's surface, and if you will behave with only the least deference to her, she will invite you to come and live at one of them while you paint. They say," he went on casually, "that the Gotcashes—I beg their pardon, the Gottschalks—have stocked their cellars for their grandchildren's time."

"And he took Him up to the top of a high mountain, and showed him the kingdoms of the world," misquoted Gilmore. "Go away, Frank. I don't intend to leave Miss Eldridge's side until she herself sends me away."

Maisie Greer, the gold mesh bag finally stuffed to bursting, drew near.

"I've come to redeem my promise, Mr. Gilmore," she announced. "I'll drive you down to Ninth Street if you'll trust yourself to me."

"You're awfully good to remember," said Gilmore impatiently, "but I'm not going quite yet, and when I do go I mean to walk all the way. It is a night to walk, and to renew the aspirations of one's youth."

Miriam's glowing hazel eyes thanked him, whether for his refusal to leave her or for the hint of good resolutions, she herself could not, perhaps, have told. Maisie shrugged her shoulders almost out of the opalescent frock.

"I'll leave you the dime for a bus fare in case you get tired of—what did you call it—'renewing the aspirations of your youth,' before you reach Ninth Street."

"Thank you, you took me too literally." Gilmore's voice was touched with haughtiness. "I still have car fare home."

"I'll match you, your car fare against this." The inveterate gambler, bright-eyed and impertinent, swung the heavy gold bag before him. Miriam watched him anxiously.

"Thank you, no." He dismissed Maisie curtly, and with a shrug and a pretty, little grimace, she turned and left them. It was Grace who finally succeeded in breaking into the tête-à-tête.

"Miriam," she said firmly, "your chauffeur has been waiting for an hour and a half, and has just telephoned up again. It is nearly two o'clock, and your people will be worried. I am to send you home, and I want you to lunch with me to-morrow."

"I'm sorry, Grace," said Miriam, "but I am lunching with Mr. Gilmore to-morrow. We've just made the engagement. I'll run in and see you in the morning if I may, though. About



"Thank you, you took me too literally." Gilmore's voice was touched with haughtiness.
 "I still have car fare home."

eleven? I want to pin you down about the performance for Inasmuch House."

"That will be very nice! I am sure we can persuade Frank to give it." Recklessly, Grace pledged her husband and his company for the sake of the little talk she meant to have with Miriam. "Come along, now. I'll take you into my room for your wraps. I had them moved there when we began to be a bit congested."

"Good night, then, Miss Eldridge," said John Gilmore. He stood up as she

rose. It seemed to Grace, watching them anxiously, that he held himself with erectness, almost with manly pride. Well, she grimly admitted to herself, he had achieved something of a triumph that night. He, the scandal-stained, the derelict, the almost out-cast, had made an impression upon the most serious-minded young woman present! How she would open that woman's eyes at eleven o'clock the next morning! That luncheon would never come off, never, never!

But the luncheon did come off, despite the exceedingly plain speaking of Grace two hours before it.

"My dear girl, I owe you an apology, and I owe your people an apology, and I owe the whole crowd which was here last night an apology," she had cried warmly, from among her pillows when Miriam had come into her bedroom. "I had absolutely no right to turn a man like John Gilmore loose among unprepared people. If I wanted to be kind to him, I should have been kind by stealth. You mustn't go to lunch with him, honey. He's—well, he's just a rotter."

Miriam, tall, ruddy, well-tailored, glowing with health and exercise, with youth and conscious, intentional nobility, patted the plump shoulder under the peach-colored *crêpe* *matinée*.

"You're a dear, conscientious child, Gracie," she said in her deep, thrilling voice, "but you forget that my work in the world, so far as I have any, is among real wrecks—wrecks of poverty, of sickness, of self-indulgence, of crime. I've never turned from one of them because of the way in which life has dealt with him. I've learned even to repress shudders at the physical marks of dreadful accidents, at scars, at deformities. You don't know what wreckage means, you dear, Sybaritic, little creature!"

"I suppose I can forgive anything as long as you don't call me 'parasitic,'" murmured Grace. "That I won't stand, I warn you."

"And I have a theory," pursued Miriam, ignoring the interruption. "I have a theory that there is no such thing in the world as waste stuff, provided people would learn how to use it, how to redeem it. Everything can be utilized, everything can be brought back into the useful life of the world. As for your Mr. Gilmore, of course, he isn't a wreck at all!"

"My dear, you've got to come off

your high horse and listen to some facts," said Grace desperately. "This new friend of yours is probably living, at this very moment, with and on some woman. He was the correspondent in the Blaney divorce suit six years ago, and he was such a completely rotten cad that he actually took the stand and gave testimony that told, under cross-examination, against Laura Blaney. Every one thought at the time that he merely wanted to make sure of Dick Blaney's getting the divorce so that he could marry Laura afterward. But he didn't marry her. A year later, she died of an overdose of chloral. And Dick Blaney had been his friend at college."

"A very nasty story," admitted Miriam, who had lost a little of her brilliant color during the hearing, "but it is nothing to me! I knew already that he was sunk pretty low. He told me so himself. He warned me, Grace, that you would tell me horrid tales of him, and that they would all be true, but—that—that they didn't need to be true forever. He told me he could paint, and that he almost felt again the impulse to paint; that it began to seem possible to pull himself up, just because I had looked at him as though I didn't despise him. I tell you this, Grace," she added courageously, "not because I am vain over a conquest, but just to prove to you that I am not concealing anything from you. It isn't the first time, you see, that I have *willed* life and hope into people. That's my job. That is what I can do in the world. That is what I have done in a small way. I've been able to give this one money, that one a bit of education, the next a hospital cure. I've believed in the possibility of healthy regeneration for them all. Of course, this is the first time that it ever seemed to me I had so worth-while a chance to help a man. Frank says he is a genius."

"He used to be able to paint," Grace

agreed grudgingly. "But you must see that the situation is entirely different from these other cases of yours. Here is a man who was of your own world and who lost that world through his own deliberate choice. He may be able to paint as divinely as Leonardo—only he isn't—but that doesn't save him from being, personally, a rotter. You can't have personal relations with him, my dear, and you can't have any other kind, either. He is, in a way, of your own class. You can't treat him as a mere case. And I tell you, there's nothing vile that he hasn't done! He owes every one money—big sums, little sums, sums he borrowed, and sums he jockeyed people out of. He doesn't know how to be honest with women. He doesn't scruple to ruin the innocent, as well as to bring the others lower still. He gambles, he drinks, he cheats, and he hasn't done a stroke of work for years. Now, will you kindly go to the telephone and call him up to say that you have changed your mind about lunching with him?"

"No, Grace dear, I will not," said Miriam firmly. "As I said before, you haven't told me anything about him which he hadn't already told me about himself, in effect, anyhow. And I had already made up my mind to go to work on him and for him, as hard as I ever worked over one of my cases. I mean to salvage this piece of the world's wreckage!"

"Oh, of course, I always knew he had a sort of fascination for women," groaned Grace, "but I thought it was only for the fools or the animalistic sort. It seems I was mistaken."

Miriam reddened, but she did not drop her eyes.

"You are mistaken if you think I am fascinated by the man," she said. "It's the case that fascinates me. I give you my word, poor worried old dear, that I haven't the slightest inclination of the romantic sort toward him. He's good

looking, or has been, of course, but in a much too-obvious way to appeal to me. He talks well enough, but I've heard a hundred better talkers. He's magnetic, I suppose, or was, once upon a time, but not half so magnetic, to my taste, as lots of other men. I am not an infatuated female, Grace. Please believe it!"

She spoke with conviction and with her habitual honesty of manner. Grace looked up at her despairingly.

"You baby!" she cried.

"You're the baby," Miriam answered spiritedly. "You have the childish point of view that there is only one strong attraction possible between any man and any woman, and that the attraction of the flesh. Watch me, and you'll learn something you haven't learned yet."

"My only hope," declared the lugubrious little woman from the bed, "is that you will bore him stiff with your seriousness and your idealism, and that he will simply bolt your 'treatment.' He'll never stand for being bored, and I hope you'll do just that to him so soon that nothing worse may come of it. I think I'll call your mother up, anyway, and ask her to take you to Aiken or somewhere to-morrow. By the time you come back, he may be in jail. He has been, you know—Ludlow Street—for something connected with bankruptcy proceedings."

"You're a sweet thing, Grace," said Miriam laughing in spite of her seriousness and determination, "full of the milk of human kindness. But you'll call mother up quite in vain. She has ceased to struggle against my occupations. She doesn't attempt to control my goings-out and comings-in. She gives me the liberty of a worker, though she isn't crazy about the work. She would see in Mr. Gilmore what you fail to recognize in him—another one of Miriam's cases. Good-by, dear. I've got to fly."



After the wedding, John had been served with papers in a breach-of-promise suit.

II.

The marriage of Miriam Eldridge and John Gilmore, which occurred about ten months after their meeting, was attended by a painful amount of newspaper notoriety. It might all have been avoided, as Miriam bitterly felt, had not her parents made an eleventh-hour capitulation to the necessities of the case and "given their consent" to

what was bound to happen without it, coupling the parental blessing, however, with the stipulation that the ceremony be conducted along the elaborate, old-fashioned line befitting a daughter, the only daughter, of the house of Eldridge.

"There mustn't be anything hole-in-the-corner about it, Miriam," her mother had ruled, when finally she had

recovered from hysterics, threatened melancholia, and other forms of protest, and had resumed her habitual pose of domestic authority. "There simply can't be! All the more, because Mr. Gilmore has been—well, I want to spare your feelings as much as I can, so I will merely say 'talked about.'"

"Can't old scandals ever die?" demanded Miriam energetically.

"Apparently they must be older than those connected with—er—our prospective son-in-law," said Mrs. Eldridge, energetic and a little bitter in her turn. "But never mind that. What I say is that there must be a wedding, a church wedding, with invitations to every one whom we know and whom he knows. Nobody must ever be able to say that it was a disgraceful marriage, performed in secret."

"Oh, very well," the harassed Miriam had yielded.

John, the reformed John, yielded also. He told his fiancée that he 'got' her mother's point, and that, disagreeable as the formality of the occasion would be to him, he would go through with it.

Accordingly, Miriam's wedding day, being well-advertised, was the date of the serving of three judgments against John Gilmore by creditors who had long since given up all expectation of ever being paid, and who, perhaps, had forgotten him until the public prints chronicled forth his approaching estate of benedict, coupling it with his Ninth Street address. That, however, was not the whole or the worst of the day's procedures. A woman called to see Miriam in the morning, and gaining admission to that young lady's presence, told her that she, the visitor, was John Gilmore's wife "in the sight of God." Miriam answered her coldly.

"I suppose you mean that you have been his mistress. Unfortunately, you are not the only person who has that claim, such as it is, upon him. You do

not tell me anything he has concealed from me, coming here like this. I am sorry for you, or I should be sorry for you if you were a woman who seemed less able to cope with the world, but I am going to marry him. I think," she ended gently, "that I am going to be better for him than you and women like you have been. I think, I believe with all my heart, that I am going to bring out the highest and not the—the other side of him. Meantime—" her hand moved toward the check book on her desk, and the wife "in the sight of God" intimated tearfully that she could do with a slight pecuniary salve to her feelings. That evening she appeared at the church door, considerably intoxicated, and was removed by the sexton just before the wedding party arrived, but not before several of the guests had been treated to choice bits of reminiscence and prophecy by her.

And after the wedding, John had been served with papers in a breach-of-promise suit by the agents of a somewhat more recent inamorata than the lady who had visited Miriam. This suit, which was, as the morning papers gladly chronicled, for fifty thousand dollars, was compromised by the payment of five hundred.

Altogether it was a horrible, a nerve-racking day. Miriam felt that there was much to be said in favor of the hole-in-the-corner procedure decried by her mother, especially when one was marrying a man with the variegated past of John Gilmore.

Her mother said that, at any rate, the worst that could happen had happened. There was nothing more to fear except—and then she forebore and closed tender, maternal arms about Miriam and said:

"Indeed, my darling, I do not think there is anything to fear. I believe he is changed and will stay changed. You are worth it, my sweetest!"

Whereupon Miriam had turned

starry eyes upon her mother and had said, in her most thrilling tones:

"I know that he is, mother. I know it! And oh, if you could only realize how worth while it seems to me! Worth while enough to pay for all this day's sordidness."

And then they had kissed, and Miriam had gone down the stairs to join her reformed John Gilmore and to adventure forth with him. At the dining-room door, lingering among the intimates who were assembled for the flinging of the final shoe or the last handful of rice, was Maisie Greer, a most ultra person with a white-fox fur collar meeting a pair of emerald earrings. Miriam paused to thank her for the wonderful, carved-ivory chessmen she had sent as a wedding present.

"I'm glad you like them," said Maisie cordially. "Of course, I wished I dared to send you some poker chips or dice or something really useful. But John tells me he's given up betting."

"Yes," said Miriam.

"Funny," mused Maisie. "You're against gambling, and yet you take the perfectly reckless chance of marrying—any one, to say nothing of an old rounder like John Gilmore."

"Well, he takes a chance, too," observed Miriam.

"Um——" Maisie weighed John's risk with narrowed lids. They were delicately touched with blue. John, pale from the strain of the day, appeared and put his hand on Miriam's arm.

"The car's at the door, dear," he said. Then, catching sight of Maisie, he paused to speak perfunctorily to her.

"Can such things be?" Maisie demanded of the Frank Stevenses, with whom she had come to the wedding and with whom she went away from it. "Do you remember that perfectly disreputable old soak who matched me for dimes and quarters at your house last January? And look at him now! He looks like an elder in the Presbyterian

church in my home town of Podunk. Don't tell me it's love," she added vivaciously, "for he'd been what he called in love about seventy-five times before! What's come over him?"

"Something which I regret to see you women don't believe in," said Frank Stevens. "And that is the power of a good woman! Of course," he added pensively, "it is a power that needs renewal from time to time. But—well, perhaps it will all turn out well. He's working again, that's the main thing."

"Poor Miriam!" sighed Grace. "Do you know that the dear, infatuated creature told me only three days ago that she hadn't fallen a victim to John Gilmore's shopworn fascinations, but that she had grown to feel that the contract she had made with herself to see him through included marriage? A thoroughgoing reformer, what?"

"How did she come to tell you that?" said Frank interestedly.

"Oh, apropos of a conversation we had had about him when she first took him up, the day after she met him at our house. I warned her against him, I begged her on my knees not to have anything to do with him. I sketched his career as far as decency permitted. She told me that she was bent upon saving him. 'Salvage from the world's wreck' I think she called him. I accused her forthwith of being just commonly or gardenly attracted by him, and she denied it hotly.

"Well, we went on tour shortly after that and I didn't see her until we opened here again last week, with the wedding invitations out! I should have been more than human if I hadn't crowed a little, I think. But she assured me, with the same solemnity she had shown the other time, that it was not a crude matter of soft words that had won her, but the determination to make a complete job of reforming John Gilmore. Isn't she a funny child?"

Meanwhile Miriam was speeding off on her wedding journey with her reformed rake. He was a different-looking man from the one she had seen shaking dice with Maisie Greer ten months before. He had not passed without scar through the battle with his appetites. The thick, mouse-colored hair showed streaks of gray, and there were lines across the square forehead. About his lips, too, there were lines, but the flabbiness had gone from face and figure. He held himself erectly, his waist was once more defined, his mouth was firm and clean-cut again.

Miriam thought, as she sat in the seat opposite him and looked at him out of brilliant eyes, of nights when he had called her up to tell her, as he had promised to tell, that the terrible craving for drink was upon him; nights when she had, as she in turn had promised, and as her working-woman's freedom from home interference in her 'cases' allowed, met him, to ride back and forth upon the Staten Island boats, fighting inch by inch the creeping monster of desire. She recalled the thick china cups of black coffee he had drunk in obscure workmen's restaurants. How they had worked together to conquer those recurring tempests of desire! She felt that the strain of them was in her soul as it was upon his face.

She had kept him at work, too. At first he had been fitful, frequently discouraged, disgusted, despairing. He said that his hand, his eye, his brain, his imagination, were all dulled, atrophied; that he had lost the power to paint. Inch by inch she had fought against those moods of depression, the most dangerous allies of all his old habits. She had gone into the fields with him, off upon the rivers, into the parks, and had sat silent while his clearing eyes took note once more of shadings, of atmosphere. She had fairly nursed every gleam of self-confidence, and, day by day, she had kept

him at work. Let him smear it all out the next day, if that seemed good to him, but whatever happened, he must reestablish the habit of work.

It was not until The Seven, the little group of men with whom he had exhibited in the days of his youthful promise ten years back, had asked him to step into the vacancy caused by the death of one of them, and to exhibit again with them, that he had asked Miriam to marry him. Despite Grace Stevens' prognostication, the note of sex, the note of sentiment, had not been struck between them during the long months of the battle against his vices. But in the upspringing of heart occasioned by the first intimation from outside that his efforts had counted, that he was again on the highway, out of the morass, he had let his adoration have voice. Adoration, and perhaps fear as well. He had begun to value every gain he had made. He had begun to fear any chance of slipping back. He adored Miriam and he felt a desperate need of her.

"With you I can do anything," he told her. "Without you, I don't know. I shouldn't care. I could drop back again."

"You couldn't, you couldn't," she protested passionately. "I couldn't bear it."

With both of them that had stood for love, and so the amazing marriage had come about.

After it the Stevenses and their own set did not see them again for three years. They were abroad, they were in Nova Scotia, they were on the Pacific coast. Here and there old acquaintances saw them and reported that John was always exemplarily sober. Ancient creditors began to report the receipt of forgotten loans. Not even the purveyors of piquant scandal were ever able to announce that they had seen John with any woman but his wife. The circles that had known him

in his degenerate days knew him no longer. From being dissolute he had grown positively austere. Wiseacres quoted the saw about the excellent husband material in reformed rakes. Even Grace Stevens, hearing confirmation of the miracle, was inclined to admit that she had been mistaken in warning Miriam against John Gilmore. Apparently she had done the thing she set out to do. She had saved a piece of the world's wreckage and had made it finely serviceable for the world's uses.

It was in the spring of 1917 that the two women found themselves again in New York. John had three pictures in the spring academy, poetic, mellow canvases, delicately, imaginatively interpretative of nature's moods. One of them had been awarded the Babcock prize. A second had been purchased on varnishing day by an American art collector whose æsthetic activities had not been discouraged any more than his income had been lessened by the world upheaval.

Grace, generously determined upon abject apology and earnest congratulation, invited Miriam for a tête-à-tête luncheon in the place where the romance of regeneration had begun.

Miriam was even handsomer than she had been as a girl, but the look of radiant confidence, the almost hard look of assurance, was gone. Her hazel eyes were as brilliant as ever, but they seemed to question more, to assert less, than in earlier years. Her color was still rich, but it glowed upon cheeks that had lost the oval smoothness of youth and were a little thin. Her temples, too, were slightly hollowed. Altogether she was not the triumphant woman whom Grace had expected to see. The bubble of felicitation, of laughing self-accusation, which was upon her lips, broke there.

"My dear! Have you been ill?" was the question that she found herself uttering instead of all the kindly, pre-

pared words. Miriam smiled and shook her head.

"No, I am quite well," she answered. "And awfully happy," Grace added, rallying her forces. "Of course, you must be! All the world is talking about John Gilmore's wonderful work. It isn't a patch to your wonderful work! I want to tell you at once, and get it off my mind, that I can never be glad enough that you wouldn't pay any attention to me that day I tried to hold you back from going to lunch with him. Remember?"

"Yes, I remember." Miriam's voice was a little listless. Grace looked at her sharply.

"You will have to forgive me if I am dreadfully prying," she said, "but you don't seem in the least as I expected you to, and I am dying to know the reason. What is the fly in the amber? Aren't the stories all true of John's change of heart? Haven't you got over being afraid for him yet? Am I awfully impertinent?"

Miriam smiled a little.

"I don't think you are impertinent," she answered. "If I could bear the things you said to me four or five years ago, certainly I ought not to take offense at what you are saying to-day. And it's all perfectly true about John. He has had himself under entire control for a long time, now! I don't worry about any relapse. Drink doesn't tempt him, and I suppose drink was at the root of all his weaknesses. At any rate, they all disappeared when he gave it up."

"Isn't it wonderful about his pictures? Aren't you the proudest woman? They are really your work as much as his!"

Miriam smiled enigmatically. She changed the subject to Frank Stevens' latest play. The luncheon went on rather aimlessly. Grace was disappointed. When Miriam was putting on her wraps before leaving, the older

woman took her courage in her hands and asked a direct question.

"Why aren't you happy, my dear? Doesn't John worship you? Isn't he grateful to you? Isn't he faithful to you? Or has he become so absorbed in his own career that he has forgotten what he owes to you?"

"You're still romantic, aren't you, Grace? Still sure that sex sentiment is the root of happiness and of all unhappiness?" Miriam smiled half teasingly, half sadly, down upon the older woman. "Well, rid your mind of fears. John is a perfectly loyal husband and even an affectionate one. He never forgets the state he was in when we met, and he has always been quite absurdly grateful to me for helping him out of it. You must not seek the reason for my changed looks in John! Only—I want you to remember some of the things I said to you that day. I told you it wasn't the fascination of the man that attracted me, it was the case."

"Ah, but you married him!" Grace interrupted triumphantly.

"It was the case that fascinated me; it was the case that I loved," Miriam repeated firmly. "And John is not a case any longer."

"What! You mean——" Grace's voice trailed off into startled silence.

"I mean that I knew myself better than you knew me, better than any one else knew me. Remember—if you should ever hear anything——" she broke off and laughed. "What a thing to say! Good-by, Grace. And give my love to Frank."

Three weeks later the artistic circle in which the Gilmores moved in New York was shaken to its foundations to learn that Miriam Gilmore had not only

left her husband—for that they had been prepared at any time since her marriage—but had eloped with another man. He was more or less like what John Gilmore had been when she had first met him, a talented weakling, headed toward ruin, a young playwright, whom an unexpected success five years before had rendered vain, idle, and self-indulgent. The comment varied about her. She was bad, a rotter. She must be; she must always have been—always attracted by the worst qualities in men. She was taking it out on John for indifference, self-absorption, unfaithfulness. Oh, let no one tell these critics that he had reformed so thoroughly as it had seemed!

Of all the group there were only two who understood her—her husband and Grace Stevens.

"I could have kept her better if I hadn't given up all my bad habits," he said to Grace. "She simply had to be rescuing, saving. Well, Clifton will keep her occupied for some time."

"What are you going to do, John?" Grace asked him.

"Whatever she wants. Of course, I'd like to go and shoot him down, the sneaking little bounder, and I'd like to refuse her a divorce. But she has made too good a job of me! She's left me with the power to resist my brute impulses. I shall do whatever she wants. I owe her that. And she—she owes me nothing, not a thing in all the world!"

His voice broke. He turned away his eyes. Grace looked at him with pity and admiration.

"Well," she said, "at any rate, she did what she set out to do with you. A real salvage from the world's wreck! You're a white man, John, and it's Miriam's doing."



Beware of a Handsome Husband!

By Winifred Arnold

Author of "The Return," "Mrs. Radigan's Picnic," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD C. CASWELL

In which Patty decides to try a dangerous experiment. A gay little love story.

FROM the very first moment that my aunt Jane proudly told me about her talk with Patty, I realized how thoroughly she had put her foot in it. The idea of preaching a "safety first" doctrine to a girl like Patty, brimful of sporting blood from the crown of her head to the tips of her toes! Why, the idea of danger merely lured her on! The idea of warning a girl like her of the dangers of marrying a handsome husband and in the same breath, doubtless, recommending me, for the evident reason that I'm so infernally homely! What fun would there be in "holding" a husband whom no one else wants? What pleasure?

Oh, it was enough to make a man wish himself straight back in the trenches with a regiment or so of Huns coming at him, particularly when she let on that the "handsome man" in this case was Alfred Meager. As somebody says, "Heaven preserve me from my friends—worse still, relatives!—and I'll take care of my enemies."

The men in our crowd in Chichester all sincerely loathe Alfred Meager. Why? Oh, for four hundred and ninety-nine different reasons, all of them excellent. For one thing, he's so infernally handsome. For another, while the rest of us all donned the olive drab, or at least went to Washington, he did his bit by staying home and being the prop and mainstay of St. Andrews' choir, and incidentally keeping the girls from being too lonesome!

Lastly, and I must admit that this bulks biggest of all to me, it was largely owing to Alfred Meager that I went away to war without proposing again to Patty. In fact, I had a lively set-to with her about the little shrimp. I would have scorned, of course, to be jealous then of such a poor excuse for a human as Alfred Meager, but the way the girls talk about his beautiful tenor voice and his exquisite manners and his other parlor tricks is enough to make anybody sick! And he certainly is a winner when it comes to looks!

I thought, of course, that his war record would wake them up, but somehow he was able to put even that across. He ought to have had a seat at the peace table! When I got back home again he was just as much of a ladies' pet as ever, and devoting himself, so aunt Jane said, particularly to Patty! Did you ever see such nerve? Even an aunt Jane couldn't queer Alfred Meager!

Patty happened to be visiting in Chicago when I came back. You know how people were those first days. They seemed to think the one thing a returned soldier was pining for was plenty of Tom, Dick, and Harry's society! Reception committees and public dinners and everybody from your step-uncle's relatives-in-law to the smallest boy on your street hanging on your lips to hear all your experiences! I never stirred without a guard of honor worthy of a visiting president! How-

ever, it didn't make any real difference to me, after aunt Jane's remarks, until I had a refreshing little chat with Mrs. Teddy Weston. Then, like a consummate fool, I blew right over, thinking that I'd got the dots on little Alfred at last. Somebody ought to put me in a home for non-comps!

However, I didn't know that then, so I really prided myself on the way I finally got the decks cleared for action and Patty off by herself in the upstairs library. Almost immediately I felt a strong draft from somewhere, and walked over and gently closed the door. Turning around, I surveyed the room: big chairs and tables and books, lighted by two or three rose-colored lamps, and Patty in a corner of the couch in a white dress. Gee, but it looked good to a man just back from a good dose of French mud and slush! I even forgot aunt Jane and fairly purred as I drifted over and dropped down on the couch myself, not too near the other end. Then, just to bridge the gap between this and our last intimate conversation, I mentioned cheerfully that her idiot friend had certainly outdone himself on fool tricks this time, and that undoubtedly she was crazier than ever about him. Of course, I really thought he had settled his hash this time, but the surprise of my life was in store for me. Far from agreeing with me, Patty promptly bristled in the same old way. And her wrath was not directed at Alfred Meager, either!

Unfortunately, Patty merely grows prettier when she gets angry. Her cheeks are even pinker and her eyes even fuller of sparkles; and every rampant little curl on her head bobs up and speaks its piece on the subject, too. Sometimes I have suspected that Patty is not entirely unaware of this fact and that her knowledge of it doesn't—to put it politely—help her any about curbing her angry passions. However, be that as it may, Patty turned on the

whole fireworks this time and no mistake. Down went her two little heels bang on the floor and up straightened Miss Patty till she looked as if she'd swallowed a ramrod.

"May I inquire to whom you are referring, Mr. Benton?" she exploded like a little firecracker.

"Why, Alfred Meager, of course. Who else?"

"O-oh, Alfred Meager. Re-ally? And what has he been doing now to displease your royal highness?"

"Now, you needn't tell me that Mrs. Teddy Weston has let you be home two whole days without telling you!"

"Telling me what?"

"About Alfred Meager's latest, of course!"

"I have not heard anything that wasn't very much to Mr. Meager's credit!"

"Oh, you haven't!"

By this time, you notice, the bristling seemed to be on the other side, and it's not particularly becoming to my style of beauty, worse luck! Patty, on the contrary, was growing cool, though still retaining the pinkness and the sparkles.

"No, I haven't. Mr. Meager happens to be the most conscientious and high-minded young man that I know," she stated loftily. "And his actions are quite in character. Of course, owing to his weak heart and his bad eyesight, he was unable to do anything spectacular for the war, but no one ever spoke more beautifully about his devotion to his country and his intense anxiety to do his bit here at home."

"Oh, yes," I snorted. "Exactly! Here at home, where all you girls were! 'Singing in the village choir!' H'm! Weak heart! If you'd say weak *head*, it would be more to the point."

"Religion has to be kept up, Tom. I hope you haven't lost all yours out there in the trenches. And he's done other things, too. If you'd only listen to him talk, Tom, even prejudiced as



Down went her two little heels bang on the floor. "May I inquire to whom you are referring, Mr. Benton?" she exploded like a little firecracker.

you are, I'm sure you'd see that he is actuated by the very finest feelings and loftiest motives! Why just the evening before I went away——"

"H'm! Fine talk always pulls it over with the women! Let me tell you, Patty Payson, that any man would agree with me that the fellow's not only an A No. 1 slacker but a presumptuous little idiot! A presumptuous little idiot!"

"I don't know why all you men have such a dislike for Alfred Meager," reproved Patty with beautiful, impersonal calm. "Of course, he's not quite one of us by birth, but that's not his

fault. A man's a man for a' that, you remember. And he certainly has a beautiful tenor voice; and since he's sung in our choir the attendance has grown so!"

"Oh, of course, that beautiful tenor voice makes him all right," I retorted. "Attendance of silly women! Any fellow with such——"

"He has beautiful manners, too," pursued Patty loftily. "I have never known *him* to speak rudely or become heated in argument. He is also rather good looking. And he has a social

conscience that I wish was much more common among the young men of today. Any one can do fine things under stress of excitement, but to study——"

"Social conscience be hanged!" I growled. "He's got enough brass about him to sink a ship. This idea of his about marrying from a sense of duty!"

"And why not?" inquired Patty virtuously. "If you would take time to read more, Tom, and study these problems of reconstruction and—er—er—things, you'd realize that every young man that can afford to marry——"

"We're having a study course at the parish house."

"Alfred Meager go?" I demanded.

"Certainly! He's the leader of our section. You ought to join, Tom."

"And is that where he got it?"

"Got what?"

"This idea of his! This infernally presumptuous idea!"

"Are you referring," inquired Patty,



"Aren't you going to see him?" I inquired solicitously, as I extended the card toward her. "Probably you didn't see the name."

"And can get the right girl to say yes," I added. "You sound as cold-blooded as a darned efficiency expert or a German scientist."

Patty descended from her high horse sufficiently to dimple. Heaven knows why!

"I'm attending some lectures on various important subjects," she said.

with her nose higher in the air than ever, "to his very praiseworthy decision that it was his duty to society to marry and establish a home?"

"His infernal presumption," I corrected, "in saying that he was going to propose——"

"A proposal," stated Patty didactically, "is the biggest compliment any

man can pay to any woman. Every one so considers it."

"Or the biggest piece of impudence," I retorted, "like his practically telling Mrs. Teddy Weston that if one girl wouldn't have him, another would. As if it didn't much matter to him!"

"I can hardly believe he said just that," mused Patty. "I admit he made a great mistake in telling anything at all to a chatterbox like Mrs. Teddy. But still it can't do any great harm. No girl he's likely to ask will hear of it."

"Oh, won't she?" I demanded sardonically. "What about Nell Carter?"

"Nell Carter!" gasped Patty. "Nell Carter! He never in the world would think of such a thing as proposing to her! Our F. F. V! What do you mean by talking about Nell Carter, Tom?"

I nodded my head with the air of a Confucius.

"I mean Nell Carter," I stated firmly. "Eleanor Calvert Carter, to be more explicit."

Patty's air of incredulity faded into a naughty little half smile. "I can't believe it," she said more slowly. "Fancy his daring! Why the little—though of course you don't mean——" The half smile expanded into a whole one. "Exactly what *do* you mean, Tommy?" she inquired confidentially.

"I met Nell at the Shelling's dinner Thursday night. Having had a hint from Mrs. Teddy about your precious Alfred's plans——"

"You didn't *ask* her?"

"Oh, no, indeed! I merely brought up the subject; said he was—gave my opinion of him, you know. Nell did the rest. She doesn't seem to feel exactly as you do, somehow."

Patty giggled.

"What did she say? Oh, Tommy! Fancy Nell Carter!"

"Oh, she agreed with me. Added a few more, in fact, on her own account. Somehow I don't think Nell subscribes to all that bunk of yours about 'a man's

a man for a' that.' She seemed to think he was several other things. Nell's—an F. F. V., as you said. But then, too, of course, she'd already heard about that high-minded line of talk of his before it came off. Mrs. Teddy happened to see her right away. Now Madge Farlie——"

"Madge Farlie! Thomas Monroe! Madge Farlie!"

"Yes. Made Farlie, I said. Your hearing isn't getting a little poor, is it, Patty? I've noticed that once or twice this evening I've had to repeat."

"Of course not, silly! You know that was enough to make anybody gasp. Madge is not at all pretty, of course, but she's an heiress in her own right; nearly a million, isn't it? He certainly has—what makes you think he proposed to her, Tom? Why I never dreamed of such a possibility!"

"Well, you see he'd talked things over very frankly with Mrs. Teddy. Seemed to think he had sort of a waiting list labeled one, two, three, and so on, according to choice. So, when I met him coming out of the conservatory where I was hunting Madge for a dance, I naturally jollied her about it!"

"What did she say? Madge is so dreadfully conceited!"

"To me? Oh, just: 'Poor little Mr. Meager. Such a nice boy, isn't he? I'm really awfully sorry for him. An attractive girl never dreams she's raising false hopes!' That sort of thing, you know. But that, I found out later, was before Nell told her."

"Told her what? Tommy, this is *rich*!"

"Why, the whole story. Somehow she'd missed hearing it. There were limits, of course, to Mrs. Teddy's lung power. After that——"

"Well?" prompted Patty.

"Oh, after that she naturally agreed with the rest of us. She is, as you say, a trifle stuck on herself."

Patty was smiling ruminatively.

"Do you know, Tom," she submitted, after a pause, "I do admire his nerve, though, really. Don't you?"

"I do not!" I reaffirmed stoutly. "I call him a presumptuous, little——"

But Patty broke in as usual.

"For pity's sake, Tom," she inquired wickedly, "why do you take it so hard? Anybody'd think you were in love with Nell or Madge. Is he, by any chance, poaching on your preserves?"

Patty certainly has a naughty little twinkle in her eye. But I had something coming to me.

"Not yet, apparently," I answered cryptically. "But you never can tell with a fellow like that. I wouldn't put anything past him. I've got to brace up myself!"

Patty's most gleeful laugh answered me.

"Oh, Tom," she cried, "really you are the funniest ever! Why, who do you think? Had you any one in mind? I'm dying to know."

We were interrupted just here by the appearance of Simon, the old colored butler. He both coughed and knocked before he entered. But all for nothing, alas!

"Gen'leman to see you, Miss Patty," he announced, presenting a card. "Do 'scuse me, ma'am, for interrupting, but he said it was very important!"

After one hasty glance at this card, Patty threw it unceremoniously upon the floor. Simon being stiff, I retrieved it before he could even bend the hinges of his aged knees. Of course, I hadn't needed to look, but it's always more satisfactory to be perfectly sure.

"Aren't you going to see him?" I inquired solicitously as I extended it toward her. "Probably you didn't see the name. Such a fine, high-minded young man! On his way to a lecture, probably."

"Certainly *not*!" declared Patty, stamping her foot. "Simon, you should

have known better than to say I was at home. You go right down and tell him that I'm——"

"Afraid, perhaps?" I interrupted pleasantly.

"Afraid? Not at all! What of?" returned Patty with a toss of her head. "Of course, if you don't mind losing part of your call! I thought since you'd just got back, I'd be specially nice to you."

"Oh, don't mind me," I begged. "I'll wait in the reception room. Or shall I withdraw entirely? My line of talk, of course, isn't at all high-minded or conscientious!"

"Stay right where you are!" commanded Patty superbly. "Mr. Meager is in the reception room, isn't he, Simon? I'll go right down."

When she returned a few minutes later, I was in the midst of a very pleasant telephone conversation with Miss Nell Carter. Patty watched me with strangely bright eyes while I brought it to a lingering and diplomatic close.

"It certainly is rich," said I into the phone. "Yes, indeed! I would give mints to know. . . . Probably we will. . . . Maybe he'll have better luck to-night. . . . Oh, I hope nobody ever tells her! . . . Dollars to doughnuts they will, though. . . . All right. Do. . . . I'll tell Patty. . . . Sure I will. Good-by, Nell. . . . You bet you! Good-by!"

"It was the youngest Powers girl last night," I chuckled, as I turned from the phone, "and Mignon Salter the night before. Nell's making it her business to keep track of him."

"The youngest Powers girl!" cried Patty with a strange note in her voice. "And Mignon Salter! Why, I thought that one of them, maybe—Mignon has always talked so much about his voice—and Betty Powers! And that makes *five*! Why, I thought it was only Nell and Madge!"

"Patty," I demanded suddenly, "has

that presumptuous little idiot been proposing to you, too?"

"A proposal," stated Patty formally, "is, as I told you, the greatest compliment!"

"Or the biggest piece of impudence!" I stormed. "When a common, ordinary, little cad like Alfred Meager—"

Patty drew herself up.

"I'll trouble you not to speak like that about my—er—fiancé," she said.

"Your *what*?"

"My fiancé, I said. Well anyway, my—"

"Have you accepted Alfred Meager? You! Patty Payson! When you knew that—"

"Knew what?"

"Why, all about this campaign of his? All about this fool talk to Mrs. Teddy? Patty, are you out of your senses?"

"Not at all." Patty's voice was so strange that I would hardly have known it was she who was speaking. "I'm being sensible and safe and sane for the first time in my life. Before you came home, Tom, I had a long talk with your aunt Jane, and she warned me, oh, so earnestly, against marrying a handsome man. She told me about Mrs. Clarence Cooper and Mrs. Andrew Brown and a cousin of hers named Peyton and oh, heaps and heaps of women who had married handsome men, and they all



"It certainly is rich," said I into the phone. "Yes, indeed! I would give mints to know."

died of broken hearts! So I promised her that I would do my best!"

"By marrying mamma's baby doll, Alfred?" I inquired bitterly, as I began to hunt around for my hat. "I certainly congratulate you, Miss Payson, but I must go."

Just then the telephone bell rang sharply and Patty turned to answer it.

"Yes," she said, "this is Patty Payson. . . . Oh, Mr. Meager? . . . She *has*? . . . Oh—why no, you can't. I'm going out! . . . Yes, right away. Good-by!"

With a trembling hand she slid the receiver back upon its hook and turned to face me with what in anybody but a newly made fiancée I should have called a perfectly stricken face.

"Tom," she whispered in little catch-

ing gasps, "he says that Mary Mason has refused him, too! Just now!"

"Refused him! What in thunder are you talking about? Has he gone on from here to another girl's and proposed to her, after you had just accepted him?"

Patty nodded

I seized her by the shoulders and shook her.

"Are you crazy," I demanded, "or am I?"

"I am." Patty's voice was so small that I could hardly hear it. "Oh, Tom, now I'll have to marry him myself, and oh, I can't! I can't!"

In my excitement I shook her again.

"For Heaven's sake, explain yourself, Patty," I begged. "You're driving me mad, girl!"

"Why, you see, I said that if he proposed to five other girls, really nice girls, you know, and they all refused him, I would marry him myself. And they have. And I can't! I can't! Oh, Tom, what shall I do?" Her voice ended in a wail.

"Do?" Why, you'll marry me and stop this nonsense! And I'll settle with Alfred Meager. Do you understand?"

Apparently Patty did. And the next ten minutes or so is nobody's business but our own. Then, partially "coming to," I demanded an explanation.

"Why-ee," Patty's voice was still low, but very conveniently situated on my shoulder, "it was partly your aunt Jane, Tom, as I told you, and partly little Alfred himself. He worried so much about his civic duty and all that, that just for fun I sicked him on by

agreeing with him. I told him it was his duty and all that. Of course, he began with me, but I really thought that either Mignon or Mary Mason would accept. And they would have, too, if he hadn't told Mrs. Teddy! And I thought I was doing them an awfully good turn because your aunt Jane said that if you insisted on marrying a handsome man, the only safe kind was one several other girls had refused. Tommy, were you ever——"

"Never, except by you," I retorted. "But why accept him, Alfred, yourself? That's what gets me!"

"Oh, that was a surprise even to me. You see, I never dreamed he'd come back to me. And when he did, right at that very moment—you see, I suspected you would pretty soon, and I remembered all your aunt Jane said, and I thought that my only hope was to be sort of engaged to Alfred!"

"Just as I suspected, you little sport, you! Anything rather than playing safe! Darn aunt Jane's buttons!"

"Poor aunt Jane! Well, I really tried, anyway. But as you say, Tom, danger just attracts me. I never can play safe!"

"You can't!" Well, what do you call marrying me?"

"A very dangerous experiment!" Patty thumped out the words on my arm.

"Dangerous?" I snorted. "I'd like to hear aunt Jane on that. Why, if you please?"

"Why, because nobody has ever refused you! You said so yourself. And because aunt Jane and I both agree, Tommy, that you are the handsomest man in the world!"



The Friendly-Eyed Stenographer

By Marion McCrea

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

A story with a fresh slant, by a promising new writer.

MY idea of the world's worst place to spend a gorgeous summer morning is the "headquarters of the beauty squad of the army of the unemployed." That's what my last boss used to call the employment department of the Remingwood Typewriter Company.

You sit around that place with a lot of blue-looking girls you don't know, watching the lady manager up in front answering telephone calls from ambitious business men all over town, who want a thoroughly experienced stenographer—one who can also do book-keeping and take phonograph dictation, college graduate preferred—for about eight dollars a week.

If you're new at this stenography game, you kill time by improving your typewriting speed on one of the practice machines that are lined up along one side of the room. But I'm experienced; I smite no alphabet unless I know I'm going to get paid for it.

On the heavenly June morning when I last sat around with the jobless squad, my languid eyes got a sudden treat. The treat was in uniform. As it walked toward the front desk, the unpowdered face of the management sunned up a little, so I got the idea that the front view of the treat must be as good as the back. It was.

He sat down at one of the practice machines when he'd finished talking with the management. I sat down at another practice machine. Mine faced his. We both began to typewrite as hard as if we were doing piecework.

After a minute of that, I raised my modest dark eyes, keeping my head low-bridge for the benefit of the management. He was just raising his come-hither blue eyes, keeping his head low-bridge for the benefit of the management. One-side of his mouth crooked up higher than the other, and his eyes crinkled together till there was nothing left but two bright pin points. Irish as Pat's pig.

He ripped the sheet out of his typewriter and it fell on the floor between us. The management was busy telephoning. I picked up the sheet. On it was typed this:

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party

G I I L I Q ! U L I K M E E ?

I just love them nervy like that—when they're good-looking. As I slipped a fresh sheet into my machine to answer, I simply had to giggle, so I suppose the rose on my Mitzi sailor simply had to jiggle.

"Miss Dox!" called the management.

I ironed out my smile and went up to the desk.

"A call has just come in for a stenographer who can take dictagram dictation. No shorthand, but you'd better go over and see the man anyway. It's a small office, and it sounds like just the right sort of place for you."



There, shooting sunshine
up into my face with a
hand mirror, I saw Friend
Soldier!

Of course the old tabby was dying for me to say, "why?" I didn't.

"You won't lose *this* position inside of two weeks on account of flirting," she meowed. "There isn't a young fellow in the place. But if there is any complaint of that sort about you, young lady, you need never come back here for another position!"

Is it any wonder no stenographer wants to work for a woman?

You can't be snippy to your bread and butter, though. I just thanked her for going to all that trouble for me, and took her card of introduction to "Mr. J. Arnold Thwombley, Room 1089, Chicago Building," and started on my way.

As I passed the cute soldier's desk, the introduction card she'd given me slipped out of my hand. He ducked for the card and came up kind of slowly. His left eyelid closed down over his crinkling eye for a second as he handed it back to me.

I simply couldn't stop smiling all the way over to the Chicago Building. A nice-looking policeman held back traffic for me as if I was a hero parade, and whistled the chorus of "Smiles" as I passed him. The elevator starter in the Chicago Building grinned at me like a billikin, and hummed, "You're in Style When You're Wearing a Smile." And as I rode up ten flights in the rickety old elevator, the operator sang, "Have

a Smile For Everyone You Meet, and They Will Have a Smile For You." Nerve!

When I got into Room 1089 and felt the cozy handclasp, and looked into the warm smile, and listened to the hot air of Mr. J. Arnold Thwombley, it came to me that a Heartwrecker Boss had entered my life at last.

You know the Heartwrecker Boss—the kind that's always handing out "typewriter supplies" of candy and theater tickets, with every little while a gold mesh bag or a corsage bouquet in which is tucked a dinner invitation and finally a beautifully worded proposal of marriage, after he has become enslaved by the steno's nobleness. You see him in the movies. But that's the only place you ever do see him. He isn't.

J. Arnold was quietly dressed, like a million dollars. He had smiled so much in his day that, looking at his stiff mouth with the two deep creases around it, I said to myself, "parenthesis, dash, close parenthesis," because it looked just like this: (—).

He liked my appearance. He could see I was just the little lady for the job. He was never prejudiced against very young girls like me—they often took more interest in their work than the older ones. All that time he'd kept hold of one of my hands and just then he hooked the other. Lordy, I hate them fresh—when they're that old! He must have been all of thirty-five. I tried to ease away, but he hung on. Then I gave him a jerk and a look that jolted the grin off his face.

"Oh, all right," he scowled. That man could certainly lower a mean eyebrow. "I always let the girl set the pace. It's strictly business from now on, if you say so. I'll start you at twelve dollars a week."

"I can't take the job for less than fifteen," I yawned, drifting gracefully down the five-foot length of the office. I gazed carelessly out of the window

while he struggled with the idea of parting with three dollars a week more than he'd sized me up as having sense enough to ask for.

He raved some more about the job—which really wasn't altogether a lemon. He said he was out of town a good deal, for one thing. And there'd be no carbon copies to make, or anything to file. I saw that "Economy First" was the big idea. Talk about keeping down office expenses—that fellow could have made money giving lessons in it to the average American business man.

But I hated working in the Chicago Building. That old firetrap sure was Thwombly's natural place of business, because the only big rents in the place were in the window shades. The Remingtonwood I'd have to use he must have stolen from some business show, out of one of those collections labeled, "Ancestors of Present-Day Writing Machines." There was no water-cooler in the office. No lavatory. No rug.

Something like a spotlight hit me in the eyes. When I looked to find out where on earth it came from, there in a window of the building across the alley, just two stories below mine, shooting sunshine up into my face with a hand mirror and laughing his tin buttons almost off, I saw Friend Soldier!

He waved his arm over the typewriter desk in front of him, then stuck one thumb in his armhole like a chesty boss, and

pointed at himself. It didn't need any master mind to get his wireless that he'd landed a job down there.

"I'll take this job," I put it up to Thwombly all of a sudden, "if you'll promise me a two-dollar raise inside of a month."

"All right. That is, if your work's satisfactory, of course," he came back, looking so glad that I thought he'd be freshening up again and maybe telling me that he and his wife weren't suited to one another. He'd said, as a poorly camouflaged hint, that I'd have to get down on time mornings, that he was an "old bachelor" who lived right downtown. But it wouldn't have surprised me if he'd forgotten the bachelor-bluff by that time. With me every man's married till he proves himself single.

But I sure needn't have worried. I wasn't bothered with any more personal attentions after that. Hardly had I got my Mitzi off my head and onto the crippled hatrack that saved Thwombly the rent of a clothes closet, than he handed me a basket with four dictagram cylinders in it, covered solid with dictation he'd jawed into the machine before I came. Then just as he was blowing out the door, he flashed that dentists'-ad smile of his on me again, and remarked that he wanted me to have all that dictation out by the time he got back—around five o'clock, at the latest! Oh, I'd struck a swell job, all right—soft, like a German prison camp.

Around five o'clock I'd just got barely through transcribing the third cylinder when a kid came in bringing me another one from the outside somewhere, half-filled with dictation, and with "RUSH! Please transcribe before going home!" marked on the box!

I was mad enough to pop.

My dear new boss didn't come back till I was just putting the "Rush" cylinder on the machine.

"If you haven't tackled that last cylinder yet, I want to make some changes



before you get it out," he smiled pleasantly, and picked up the ear tubes to listen to his dictation, just as leisurely as if it was nine o'clock in the morning, instead of quitting time. I got ready a brief but peppy labor-unrest speech for him as I slammed out the envelope addresses.

After a minute he grabbed the tubes out of his ears.

"What in Hades——" he scowled. "Who's been—what's happened to my dictation?"

I picked up the tubes.

"Have I scratched one of your forty-cent cylinders?" I frostily questioned him. "I won't stand for being almost sworn at, even if I have, Mr. Thwombly!"

But I hadn't scratched the cylinder. As it started to turn, a kind of a hushed-up baritone began to sing:

"Over there! Over there!
Sits a peach, out of reach—over there!
And I'd love to know her,
I'd love to show her
The time of her young life so fair.
Would you care, if I'd dare
To come calling on you over there?
I'll be over—I'm coming over
If you'll wave from the window when the
Main Squeeze isn't there!"

I almost fell out of the tenth-story window.

The boss' face had toned down to lavender by that time. All of a sudden he stepped to the window. So, I saw, did Friend Soldier; he was twirling something in his hands that looked like another phonograph cylinder. And when he lamped my boss, the grin he was sending up changed into a looking-for-rain expression so fast it must have sprained his features.

"This window needs a new pane," remarked the boss, feeling a windy crack in it with his finger; then he turned around and took the letters I handed him. I thought he was going to be a good scout and say nothing about the soldier's serenade. Not so.

"Please get this, Miss Dox—it's important," he ordered, as I was putting on my hat. "If I find out you're having that young calf or any one else come up here to waste your time, I'll have to discharge you. And I'll feel it my duty to advise the Remingwood employment department as to the details of my reasons for doing so," he kindly tacked on.

Ouch!

Next morning the janitor put in a new windowpane. It was a frosted-glass one, just as transparent as wood.

I wasn't much peeved. Thwombly blew in with a suit case that day and broke the joyous tidings that he had to go out of town. And the air outside was as soft and perfumey as a powder puff, even in the alley, so I knew I could throw up the old frosted glass and work by the open window all the time his nibs was away.

"I don't know just how long it will be before I get back," he told me just as he was going out of the door. "It may be two days and it may be almost a month. But I expect you to write at least sixty copies a day of Circular Letter Number One while I'm going. Get the addresses from that mailing list I gave you yesterday. Date them three weeks ahead and hold them for me."

One look at Circular Letter Number One floored me so that I forgot to raise the window when Thwombly had gone. It was a page and a half long, single-spaced. In every line the name "A-ZORA" came in at least once. That was the name of the wonderful coloring stuff that Thwombly was going to put on the market to sell to people who manufactured jellies and candies and things. It was made out of some kind of berries I never heard of before.

To type that pesky name, "A-ZORA," on Thwombly's Noah's Ark Remingwood, you had to press down the key shift to write capital A, let go of the shift just to write the miserable little

hyphen, then press the shift down again to write ZORA, and let go of it again to write the next word. About thirty-five times in each letter—get it? And in the middle of the letter there was a long old table of numbers and dollar signs and dotted lines, to show how the cost of manufacturing the dope was going down and the demand going up. And it had lots of long chemistry words and names of countries in South America. It was a nerve ruiner.

By the third day after the boss left, I had some kind of typewriter's cramp from pounding those stiff old keys, and shell shock from listening to them. Something I didn't expect came sliding out of my weary right eye and splashed down, spoiling my two hundred and seventh copy of Circular Letter Number One. Then I just put my head down on the Remingwood and started the good work of making its insides rustier than they were before.

"Beg pardon—is there a Mr.—er—Smith in this office?" asked a nice voice as the door opened. "Good Lord, you're crying!"

I was all out of luck. There was the cute soldier at last, poking his head into the doorway; and there sat me, with a shiny red nose and my dips pushed off my forehead and everything. I got fussed.

"You started it!" I seemed to hear my wet voice snap at him. He came all the way in. "Your old dictagram cylinder got me in bad with my boss! He thinks I'm a flirt! And for fear I might waste a minute of his time at the window, the old tightwad gave me the job of writing *at least* sixty copies a day of this darn letter! Look at it!"

He didn't look at it at all. He just kept his crinkled-up eyes right on me, so I couldn't fix my hair or anything.

"Oh, heck—smile up! Just give me a copy of the thing and some paper, and you and I'll slam 'em out fifty-fifty. When'll the old pill be back?"

"Any time—any minute, for all I know! And if he finds you here, I lose this job. And if I lose this job on account of—well, if I lose it, the hen at the Remingwood employment department said she'd never, never get me another job!"

"Good night! I'll get out!" He grabbed a lot of letterheads and part of the list of addresses and laid another dictagram-cylinder box marked "Rush" on my desk and beat it. Some romantic meeting! When I was dying to know his name and everything!

I slipped the cylinder on my machine.

"Dear Dulcie Doo!" Friend Soldier's voice tuned up. "My name is Derwent Ignatius Mulroy. Fierce, isn't it? I was named after a bird in a book and a saint. Have a heart and call me 'Derry,' will you—everybody I like does. I'm from Metropolia, Indiana—enlisted from there. But I'd rather be a typist in Chi than a mayor in Metropolia. Paragraph.

"Remember the day we were job-hunting? The Remingwood dame called me up to her desk just as you were going out the door, and gave me three jobs to chase up. They all sounded like dead ones—and the deadest one of all of them was the one I chased up first. Why? Oh, because it was here in the Bankers' Exchange Building—right next to the Chicago Building, where I knew from that introduction card you dropped you were going after a job. Believe me, if I ever get a chance to talk into those two cute earmuffs you wear, instead of into this blamed dictagram, I'm going to tell you how I felt when I looked out and saw you in that window right across the alley! Oh, lady, lady! Exclamation point. Paragraph.

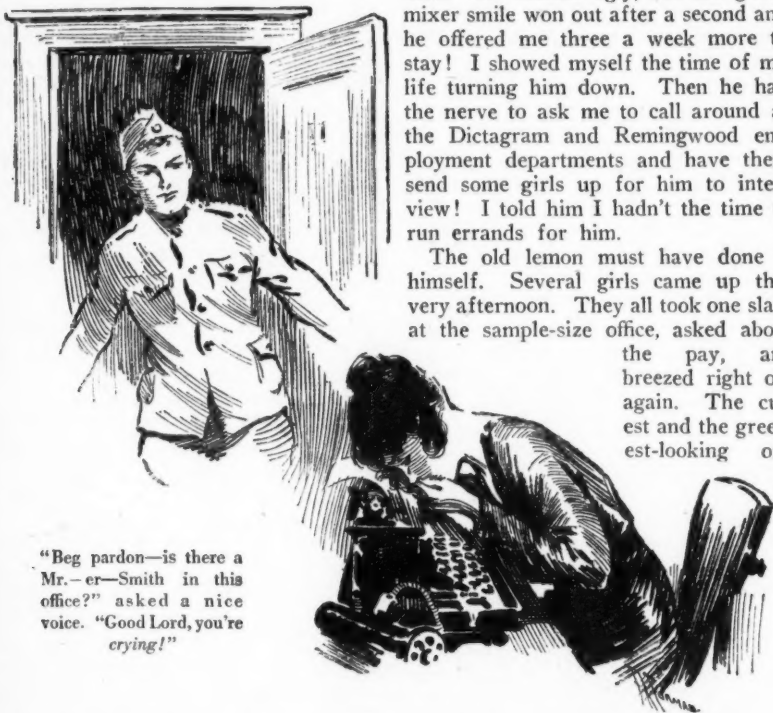
"Listen! In a couple of weeks, they're going to need a new dictagram operator here in our office! Seventeen per, to start. It's an advertising agency, and the bosses in our department are all

easy-going birds that write ads and kid a good deal and let you get away with a lot of stalling. I've told my boss about you. He wanted to know what kind of work you did and I told him you were a whiz. I hope you'll take the job—oh, boy, how I hope you'll take it! Don't write me an answer to

any more of Circular Letter Number One for a while. Thwombley stayed away two whole weeks, but I didn't bother getting out more than twenty letters a day. Thwombley and his job no longer meant anything in my life.

I slipped him the glad news about my new job first thing, the day he got back. He looked ugly, but his good-mixer smile won out after a second and he offered me three a week more to stay! I showed myself the time of my life turning him down. Then he had the nerve to ask me to call around at the Dictagram and Remingwood employment departments and have them send some girls up for him to interview! I told him I hadn't the time to run errands for him.

The old lemon must have done it himself. Several girls came up that very afternoon. They all took one slant at the sample-size office, asked about the pay, and breezed right out again. The cutest and the greenest-looking one



"Beg pardon—is there a Mr.—er—Smith in this office?" asked a nice voice. "Good Lord, you're crying!"

this—trill me one in your little dictagram. I want to hear you talk. I'll send a kid over for the cylinder before five. Please don't turn me down. Good-by."

Would I take that job? Would a doughboy fight?

Next morning, Derry sent up another cylinder, to tell me good-by. His boss was sending him out of town, so he wouldn't be able to help me out of

of the bunch came in while Thwombley was still out—for which I was glad. I could see even before the kid got through asking whether he was in or not, that she was just the kind that Thwombley would try to pester because she was good looking, like he did me, or else work to death for less than the measly job was worth. But believe me, no steno needs any tips from the I. W. W. on how to bolshevik bum bosses.

"Girlie," I said, while I offered her the seat by the open window just as kindly as I could, "I wouldn't take this job unless I needed one awfully bad. You can see what a sad hole this is to work in, for one thing. And the boss'll start by being fresh, for another thing. And then if you sit on him hard, he'll turn around and drive you like something he's rented and doesn't care what happens to! Sixty copies a day of this circular letter, kiddo, whenever he goes out of town!" I showed it to her. "And he doesn't care a whoop that you have to spoil your duds and flirt with the 'flu' sitting around in them wet, if he can save two bits by sending you out in the rain to buy some bargain-sale stationery! Tight? Honey, I've asked five times for a postal scale, but he won't get one because he knows I can sponge the use of one in another office! And then when a couple of letters came back because I hadn't put enough stamps on them, he beefed about it till I thought he was going to spank me! If you're at this game long enough, you'll meet lots of glad loop-hounds like that, with million-dollar fronts, who're tight in their office, where the world won't know it. What they want is the door-mat kind of a steno—the kind that crabs things for every other girl in the business. It'd be fierce for you here, girlie. I can see you're not the kind of a kid that'll flirt with—— Say, are you listening to me?"

She'd been gazing out of the window without moving, till it got my goat.

"Oh, yes!" she gushed. "I was—do you know that nice soldier-boy two stories down? He's been looking up here for the longest time!"

I closed the window. The wind had been blowing the papers on my desk for a long time.

"There's a lot of fresh fellows over in that building," I told her in a voice that was full of meaning. "Of course, if you *like* fresh men, you'll go big with

them—and with the boss too. He's that kind of a boss!"

She got fussed and tried to make me join in a real sisterly farewell. I'd been *so* sweet to her. I thought she was going to kiss me, but she restrained herself with difficulty. I didn't ask or care whether she'd be back again or not.

When I got down to the office next morning, Derry was waiting for me outside the door.

"Gee, who was your peachy girl friend?" was the first thing he had the nerve to say to me. "I wanted to come up to see you," he hustled to explain, when I turned my gaze on him, "and I waited a coon's age for her to go."

"Drift!" I ordered him. "Here comes Thwombley!"

Instead of drifting, Derry strolled into the office after me.

"You should be perturbed!" he gayly smiled. "It's your last day in this dump. Good morning, Mr. Thwombley."

The boss gave him a once-over that I thought would knock him dead. But no. He had the face to open my window and ask if I didn't like it better that way, and then to stand there waving light-heartedly at a fellow down in his office window.

"If your caller will excuse you, Miss Dox," snarled the boss, "I want you to begin at once transcribing those two cylinders you have left of yesterday's dictation."

But my caller wouldn't excuse me. He stayed draped over the back of my chair chinning to me till I think skinny Thwombley would have made a try at throwing the big husk out, if the door hadn't opened after a couple of minutes.

"Mr. Thwombley," said Derry, in an out-of-breath voice, as a tall, tired-looking man in a swell business suit came in, "this is Mr. Glen Willettson, my employer, the vice-president of the Lannier-Willettson Advertising Agency."

Thwombley looked absolutely floored, but he jumped up from his chair, which

was the only one in the place beside the one I was holding down, and held out his hand.

"I really must apologize for our accommodations for callers," he smiled on Mr. Willettson and Derry, too. "The A-Zora Fruit-Coloring Company is so young as yet——"

"Mr. Thwombley," butted in Derry's boss, "this is as good a time as any to let you know that your 'A-Zora Fruit-Coloring Company' has gone out of existence."

Thwombley slithered down into the chair.

"Are you insane?" he asked Derry's boss in a wobbly voice.

"There's been an informal merger, Thwombley, of the A-Zora Fruit-Coloring Company with a larger company that has been organized during the past month." Derry's boss went right on without answering Thwombley about whether he was insane or not. "The consummation of the merger deal requires only a signature or two of yours which I think you'll be glad to supply, when I explain the advisability of your doing so."

Thwombley sat looking up at Willettson with a gray poker face.

"May the mere president of the A-Zora Fruit-Coloring Company," he began to storm after he'd swallowed nothing a couple of times, "be permitted to know the name of the larger company in which it has been merged?"

"Certainly, it is the Berry-Ade Company, Incorporated," answered Derry's boss. "I'll describe the Berry-Ade proposition later. What I want to discuss with you now, is the fact that unless you can place to the Berry-Ade Company's credit the forty thousand dollars you've received from sales of A-Zora stock to unsuspicious investors in small Western communities, during the last few weeks, I'll have to give you a chance to explain where the money has gone—in court!"

"My dear sir," laughed Thwombley, in a voice that was wobbly again. "Where on earth did you acquire this remarkable fund of misinformation about my affairs?"

"By sleuth work!" exploded Derry, like a bad blowout. "I—I just happened to come up here one day and see your Circular Letter Number One, about A-Zora stock that you were trying to sell to a list of hicks out West. The lay of the land up in this office looked kind of phony to me: no name on the door; no phone; no address in any kind of a directory; no files; no books; no carbon copies; no stenog's notes; no record of anything you'd ever written or done. Then I happened to—well, the straight of it is, Miss Dox dictated a little note on her dictagram and sent the cylinder down to me, and when I put it on our dictagram, expecting to hear her voice, I heard *yours*, spiling off a letter that she'd forgotten to shave off the wax cylinder before she began to dictate my note. That letter of yours was to Felipe Seniano, that innocent little fish of a partner of yours down in St. Louis, telling him the darned lie that you hadn't been able to get patents as yet, on his formulas for making coloring matter out of those burbanked berries that his brother is growing in South America; and also that you couldn't open an office and begin the stock-selling campaign for perhaps a year or more! Wow! I told my boss. We soon got all the dope on your stock sales and private expenses, you bet! Just finished yesterday——"

I was in almost a dead faint, but Mr. Willettson's laugh brought me to.

"It's cruelty to interrupt the oration of your young life, Mulroy, but I think Mr. Thwombley can supply the details himself, and I want to get some signatures from him without losing any more time."

"Oh, just let me be the one to tell him," begged Derry, "what we're go-



"Mr. Thwombley," said Derry, "this is Mr. Glen Willettson, my employer, the vice president of the Lanier-Willettson Advertising Agency."

ing to make of that tropical berry of Semiano's! Thwombley," he frowned, almost splitting his khaki blouse trying to look like a fat banker or something, "I'm surprised that it never occurred to a man of your undeniable cleverness to look into the possibilities of the 'A-ZORA' berry, as you call it—I know the scientific name as well as you do—for the making of a fruit-juice beverage! I asked old Semiano about that before I'd talked to him ten minutes! And that funny old chemistry hound went into his basement and came up with a bottle of absolutely the most scrump—delicious port-wine-and-rubies-colored drink the boss or I ever tasted. Better than any kick-drink ever! The boss gave our star client, Mr. Julius Schlossman, of the Schlossman Breweries, an introduction to the drink, and say, Schlossman almost broke his neck to cinch the rights to the formula and to all the berry crops he can contract for!

He'd been changing the beer-making equipment of his breweries so as to manufacture a new brand of ginger ale before July first. But now all the enormous Schlossman plants are going to make our Berry-Ade! Our agency's going to put Berry-Ade on the market. And old Schlossman's motto when it comes to advertising is, 'Darn the expense!' Oh, boy! electric signs on every big-town sky line in the United States, billboards strung across the country from one ocean to the other, colored double-page magazine and theater-program spreads and inserts and back-covers, of Berry-Ade rickeys and juleps and highballs and all the other drinks with the old joy names, miles of newspaper space, and all this featuring the *new* taste of the luscious South

American berry, hitherto absolutely unknown in the United States! Don't you realize, Thwombley, what kind of a gold mine a soft drink with a *new* taste and a 'come-back' kind of a taste is, right now? Don't you see that you've missed out on a proposition that's just like automobiles and movies in their early days? You know how cheap we can ship the berries, dried, and the kind of prices we can sell Berry-Ade at, to the highbrow café and hotel dry-bar trade! Sa-ay, I'm getting a nice little block of Berry-Ade stock as a bonus, and a job as city salesman out of this mix-up. I can afford to do whatever I want now, get married or anything! Honest, I feel sorry for you, Thwombley!"

"Oh, please don't distress yourself on my account!" Thwombley begged him, in the nastiest voice. "Mr. Willettson," he grinned at Derry's boss, "there'll be no difficulty whatever about my replacing, within two weeks at most, the money I've received from A-ZORA stock sales. It's practically all spent, as you seem to have learned. But, I assure you, I have never had any intention of swindling a single investor."

"I'm practically sure you're lying," answered Derry's boss, just like that. "But if you produce the forty-odd thousand within two weeks, this thing stays out of court and I say no more about my suspicions. I somehow feel I owe you this chance to pull out, because we stand to make a lot of money indirectly by reason of your carefree financial methods. But I want to know where your money is-going to come from. I happen to know that you'll have to mortgage or sell pretty much everything you own, to make good on the big I. O. U. you're going to make out to the Berry-Ade Company, before we leave this office."

Thwombley had got the good-fellow smile back into working order and he was raying it up into the cigarette

clouds he'd started puffing toward the ceiling.

"No, I'm happy to say I won't have to inconvenience myself in the slightest degree, sir," he answered. "I've no objection to telling you that I'm just about to marry the most charming young woman in the world, who, by the way, happens to have a readily convertible fortune in her own right, and who has every confidence in my judgment."

"God help her!" congratulated Derry.

"How singularly opportune!" frowned Derry's boss. "Remember, Thwombley, that all your activities are going to be quietly but thoroughly watched, from now until that money's paid over."

Thwombley just laughed.

"I want to tell you also," he smiled, "that our young military friend here has almost 'sold' me on Berry-Ade. The future of the soft-drink industry certainly interests me. In about a month, I'll be in a position to look into the matter of relieving you gentlemen of any amount of the new stock— Sign for that, Miss Dox," he interrupted his own hot blast, as a boy came in and handed him a special-delivery letter.

Derry gave me his fountain pen.

"You—blankety-blank-XYZ young devil!" yelled Thwombley.

Whether he meant the mail-boy or me or Derry, I didn't know, because even before I'd jerked my head up, Derry had punched Thwombley in the jaw. I had just time to pick up the letter Thwombley had dropped before Derry's boss hustled me out into the hall. He and I read the letter together. It said:

MR. J. ARNOLD THWOMBLEY: I am returning your ring by parcels post. I came to Chicago yesterday on what was to be a surprise visit to you. Quite by accident, I learned what it is seldom given a fiancée to know—an absolutely honest opinion of the man she is going to marry, as held by his stenographer. Good-by forever.

ETHEL TILBURY.



Paying *the* Debt

A Sketch

By Victoria Day

I. In Daniel Header's Office.

ALL these years I have hated him, worked and schemed against him, defeated silently, subtly, all his dearest projects. I vowed that I would do it when Vera married him, throwing me over for his sake.

Twelve years it has been now. I remember their wedding in the gaudy suburban church—a gaudy wedding, too. Vera screwed the last cent out of her family for that splurge. I ushered—"just to show that you forgive me, Dan," she had said, with her full, dark eyes misty with tears. She had not told Craven, of course, of our secret engagement. Trust Vera not to make damaging admissions! "Sure I'll usher, Vera," I had told her. "And don't you trouble your pretty, marcelled head about my forgiveness. Craven is a better match than I am—to-day. And it's to-day you want to marry, not next year or the year after. Go ahead, and forget me—if you can. It's your gamble, and even if I think you're backing the wrong horse, it wouldn't be good sportsmanship for me to grouch. Go to it. I'll ush—" and I did usher at the showy wedding in the showy church, with the white satin ribbons and the bunches of tea roses on the pews, and the eight ushers and the eight bridesmaids—four primrose-col-

ored ones and four apricot-colored ones—and the organist doing his damndest with "Lohengrin"—twelve years ago, you see, it was not bad form to prance up the aisle to German tunes—and Vera's mother in very tight heliotrope brocade, and scared stiff for fear she'd make some break that would put Vera in bad with the Cravens. Lord, how I remember every detail of that show! The crowd at the house, the furniture moved into the shed to make room for 'em, the champagne, Donahue's Band—

Craven, too—how I have remembered him! Good-looking fellow, debonair and easy, laughing, confident. It was no wonder that Vera, when she had the chance, picked him for a winner against me. Born to it all! Enough money from his perambulator days. College, without any waiting at table and doing professional baseball on the sly, to eke out! Well-bred family, pretty sisters, society, as the suburb knew society! Good frat at college—everything! He had a weak chin, though. And from the moment Vera threw me over for him, he had an enemy.

We had never met since the wedding—until last night. I had moved away from the suburb, taken a hall room in a dingy side street and plugged away. Craven and Vera had begun to

show the little old overgrown village what was what in social life. He now came to his office later and later. I was at mine where I had long since got a foothold, early. Before the first year was over I had got the Hazlitt account away from his firm.

It was I—indirectly—who got him into Melanda Oil. I was in it, too. I stayed in just long enough. I pulled out a week before the slump began. When Melanda finished slumping, the young Cravens gave up one of their cars and one of their housemaids.

So it went on. I'm a pretty good hater. I hated Craven, hated him for all that he had been born to while I was running barefoot, and especially I hated him for robbing me of Vera. For I had certainly been crazy about her. I knew her through and through, of course—but I wanted her with all her pretensions, all her selfishness—I could have curbed her, I wanted her—hard, bad!

For twelve years I've been after him. For twelve years the things he has touched have crumbled. Three years ago they sold their place out there and moved to the city, to some bowling-alley apartment, one of a million like it, on the far reaches of the upper West Side. I stopped bothering them then. He was done for. Years before he had ceased to be a partner in Rice, Findley & Craven. He now had a poor clerkship in a brokerage house. I didn't need to bother with him any longer. I could leave the finishing touches to Vera. Oh, yes, I could trust the finishing touches to Vera!

And last night I saw them again. Romney and I are in together on a deal, and Mrs. Romney is very hospitable. She was giving what she called an *omniumgatherum*, and she had made a point of my coming. And there, on the fringes of the crowd, hungry-eyed for a little pleasure, a little notice, a little success, I saw them—the Cravens.

His dress suit was shiny across the shoulders. Her black net had been put together by a two-dollar-a-day seamstress in a back room in their flat—I could swear to it. He was thin, hopeful, cringing—like a dog whom experience has taught to expect kicks and cuffs, but whom nature makes perpetually forgetful of experience. They stood around on the edges, admiring pictures so as to have something to do!

And Vera—Good Lord, what that poor fellow had saved me from. Could twelve years do that to the body that had once been so alluring to me—expand those voluptuous curves into cushions, coarsen those features, twist that red mouth into a peevish line between parentheses of bad temper, engrave scowling lines on the pretty forehead? Twelve years—and disappointment? Gad, what a third-rate virago she looked!

I went up to them. I told her she hadn't changed a day's worth, and the poor fool looked at me eagerly as though she thought I might be imbecile enough to mean it. Her voice had changed, too—she could scarcely keep it suave even for social purposes. I found out that they were on Mrs. Romney's *omnium* list because her mother had once known Craven's mother.

A vulgar shrew, Vera now, devoid even of good looks!

What a debt I owe to Craven! I am going to pay it! I am going to help him back! He'll never amount to a great deal—but I'm going to pay my debt to him and take him back as far as he is capable of going. I've asked him to my office this morning. Gad, what I owe to that man!

II. In Mrs. Craven's Bedroom.

"Did you see him, Will? What did he have to say? What was it he wanted? *What?* A young firm, just forming, and a chance to buy in? But

what good will that do you? You can't buy in—you haven't the money. *What!* He'll advance it? Will! Surely you aren't going to be fool enough to let a chance like that go by? What? You can't fathom his reason? He hasn't a reputation for going out of his way to do kindnesses you say? Oh, nonsense! I've known Daniel Header ever since I was born, and he is a kind-hearted man—I know he is. Not a gentleman, of course—his father was gatekeeper at the railroad crossing out home, but thoroughly worthy, respectable people—

"A great obligation, you say? But what is five thousand to him? You'll do it, won't you, Will? It's our chance—your chance—my chance! And you owe it to me—think of what I have gone through since I married you. One thing after another taken from me! You've got to do it! You've simply got to! What's that? Not unless I consent to your making over your life insurance to him in case— What foolishness! But go ahead—I know there isn't going to be any 'in case' about it. Go and telephone him immediately, if you left the thing hanging. Don't lose any time. Oh, Will! To think of getting back again where we belong. How can you hesitate? Hurry—hurry! It's so like you to lose luck through sheer indolence, slowness— Go on!"

Half reluctantly Craven went out of the room and down the hall. Immediately Mrs. Craven went to her mirror. Then frowning, she ran up the shade

at the only window. Studying herself with approval, she smoothed down the too redundant curves of her hips, and with her forefingers ironed out from her forehead and mouth the lines of bad temper and meanness.

"I'll take massage again," she mused, "and I'll go to the mechanical exercise place. To think of his remembering and caring all these years! It is sweet of him to do this for Will—for us. It's the touch of romance you wouldn't expect from that sort of man." She smiled kindly at her reflection. Then as her husband entered, "All concluded, Will? I am glad! Don't look so puzzled, dear! Have you quite forgotten that once upon a time Daniel Header used to be rather fond of me! Don't you remember, he was a consolation usher at our wedding. There was nothing in it, of course—he wasn't in our set at all. But—it's rather touching, his remembering all these years, isn't it—and being true to the old feeling he had?" Again she looked with satisfaction into the mirror. Her husband studied her meanwhile with disillusioned eyes. Giving an upward pressure to a slightly sagging chin, she continued, "Dear of him," and her satisfied eyes told the satisfied eyes in the mirror that, after all, this lover's loyalty was quite comprehensible!

And down in his Broad Street office the self-made millionaire ejaculated once or twice more: "Gad, what a debt I owe him! What he saved me from—poor fool!"



New York Stage Successes

Adam and Eva

A Sparkling Comedy of Family Life

By Guy Bolton and George Middleton

BLACK Monday—the first of the month! Mr. James King, prosperous rubber speculator, and head of a parasitic family that includes several sponging relatives, sits in his library opening bills. It is not a happy morning. There are bills almost innumerable, and almost unbelievable in size, for the gowns and hats and lingerie of his daughters, Eva and Julie (Mrs. Clinton De Witt). There are Uncle Horace's doctor's bill, and bills for his sister-in-law Abby's club dues and charities.

Julie enters, followed by Clinton, who is evidently not a favorite with his hard-working father-in-law.

MR. KING: Good morning, Julie. Good morning, Clinton. (*Overhearing their conversation*) So you're proposing to keep my gardeners busy growing flowers to match your taste in ties?

JULIE: Surely, father, you don't want to see Clinton dressed in a jarring color scheme.

MR. KING: One jar more or less where Clinton is concerned won't matter much. And, by the way, while we're on the subject of son-in-laws, I'd like to say a word regarding this young lord who is out riding with Eva.

JULIE: "Son-in-law?" You don't mean to say that Lord Andrew has proposed to Eva!

CLINTON: Splendid!

MR. KING (*still opening bills*): You think so, do you? Well, let me remark that I'm sick of being cast for the part of the goat in all our domestic romances.

JULIE: But surely, father, you want Eva to marry well, don't you?

MR. KING: If by "well," you mean marry the frayed-out end of a long line of ancestors—no, I don't! And I want you folks to understand that I care a damn' sight more about keeping my name in *Bradstreet's* than I do about getting it in the *Blue Book*. I tell you I'm sick of trying to turn a business plant into a family tree. (*ABBY enters.*)

ABBY: Good morning, James. Do you mind if I take the Pierce-Arrow this morning? It's so much faster than our car, and I'm late.

MR. KING: Where are you going—the home for stray cats, or the Society for the Advancement of Art among the Poor?

ABBY: Don't be silly, James. I'm going to a meeting of the Mental Efficiency League. Such a splendid thing. We hold classes in memory training. Really, James, you ought to attend them. It would be of *such* help in your business. They bring in a tray containing twenty objects. You glance at it three times, and then you try to describe—

MR. KING (*breaking in*): By the way, what do these lessons in memory training cost?

ABBY: Really, James, I don't remember.

MR. KING: They cost two hundred and twenty-five dollars. I can remember that, and I only glanced at the bill *once*.

ABBY (*vaguely*): Oh, did I tell them to send the bill to you? (*Turning to piano*) I suppose I must have—

MR. KING: Will you people kindly tell me why on earth you run accounts at so many different stores?

JULIE: Well—it seems to make the bills so much smaller.

MR. KING: Between you people and the income tax, I don't believe I'll have to get

By Courtesy of the Authors and of F. Ray Comstock and Morris Gest, Producers.

any extra help to land me in the bankruptcy court. (*Eva, her father's favorite, enters, dressed in riding costume.*)

EVA: Good morning, everybody. What is this—a family conference? Hello, daddy. (*Kisses him.*) I'm glad you are still here—because I'm going to have a quarrel with you.

JULIE: You'd better not say anything now, Eva. Father is in one of his first-of-the-month moods.

EVA: Then we're both in the same state of irritation. Tell me, blessed head of the family, what on earth caused you to make a fool of both me and yourself by writing and refusing my hand to a gentleman who has never asked for it?

MR. KING (*doggedly*): The fellow's been hanging round for a month.

EVA: And I intend that Lord Andy shall continue to hang round me until he ceases to amuse me, and if that should mean that I may keep him hanging round till death do us part, that is *my own business*. I'm the one that has to live with him, not you.

MR. KING: That may be true in *some* homes, but not in mine.

JULIE (*pained*): Please—please, father! When you say that, you're reflecting on Clinton.

MR. KING: No, I never reflect on Clinton—I couldn't bear it. But I've had about enough of this continual bickering and organized opposition to all of my wishes. What do you people think will become of you after I'm gone, and you've spent all the money? You'll have to beg.

EVA: Well, one comfort is we have had plenty of practice.

MR. KING: What you need—all of you—is a little quiet thinking so that you can recover your sense of values. And for the purpose of seeing you get it, we are going to move next Monday.

EVA: Where are we going? To Newark?

MR. KING: No, Newark! Fifteen miles outside of Newark, at the old farm where I was raised as a boy.

JULIE (*staggered*): Not—not that *awful* place you pointed out to us when we drove down to the Yale-Princeton game?

MR. KING: That's the place. And I warn you, you may as well start to pack up.

CLINTON: What on earth shall we do there, pater?

MR. KING (*gruffly*): Raise chickens. Maybe you can learn something by seeing how hard they have to scratch for a living. I'm going to breakfast. (*Exits.*)

There is consternation and dismay in the family group he leaves. Going to Newark is quite out of the question! Then Clinton, with whom ideas are not overfrequent, excites his wife's admiration with the suggestion that they all unite in persuading "the pater" that he is ill, and must go on a long trip for his health. Doctor Delamater is to be called in to the conspiracy, to order his involuntary and unsuspecting patient to drop business and family cares at once, and take a three months' trip to his rubber plantations up the Amazon. The family will then be left entirely unhampered in its extravagances.

When Doctor Delamater, who is also a sutor of Eva's, comes in, the subject is at once broached to him.

DOCTOR: Is your father really suffering from something?

EVA: Yes—family complaint. *Too much* family. And we're suffering equally from too much father. We've called you in, doctor, to ask you to help us to get rid of father.

DOCTOR (*horrified*): Help you get rid of him!

EVA (*laughing*): We're not asking you to treat him. We want you to prescribe a long trip. Father's a dear—and I love him very, very much, but he's getting a bit rambunctious lately.

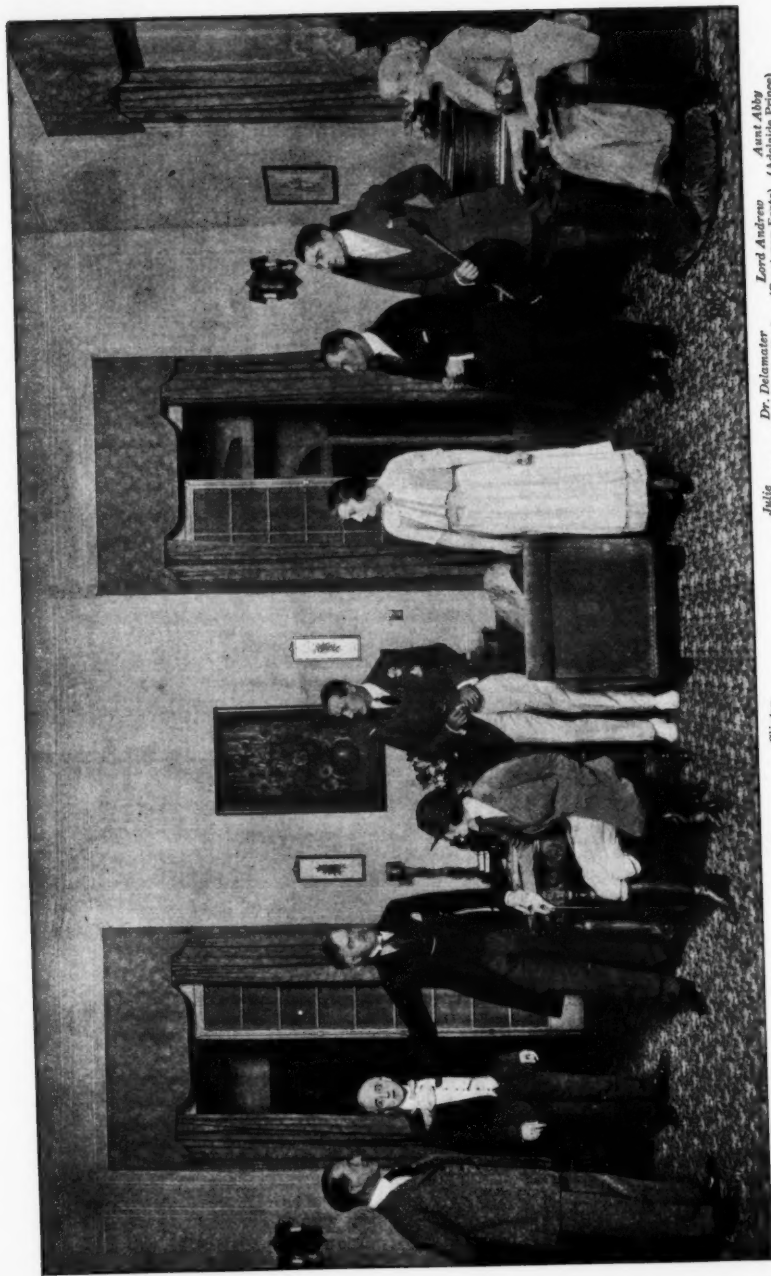
DOCTOR (*close to her*): Well, if your father is bossing you around too much, why not move across the road? That new home of mine is waiting for a mistress. How many times are you going to make me propose to you?

EVA: Thank you very much, Doctor Delamater, but I'm not ready to take charge of *anybody's* home just yet. My present desire is not to change bosses, but to get a complete vacation. You'd be just like father—only jealous besides. But let's discuss daddy's symptoms.

DOCTOR: You have diagnosed a new disease, I believe—acute "familitis."

EVA: Yes, some systems can stand a lot of family, but his can't. And this morning his complaint ended in an absurd obsession—that his family would be greatly improved by spending the summer raising chickens, on a disgusting old farm in New Jersey.

DOCTOR: New Jersey! That is certainly



Adam
(Otto Kruger)

Uncle Horace
(Ferdinand Gottschalk)

Mr. King
(Berton Churchill)

Eva
(Ruth Shepler)

Clinton
(Reginald Mason)

Julie
(Roberta Arnold)

Dr. Delamater
(Richard Sterling)

Lord Andrew
(Courtenay Foote)

Asst. Abby
(Adelaide France)

Mr. KING: Mr. Smith will be the head of this household while I'm gone.

serious. Yes—*very* serious. Why, I couldn't see you if you moved to New Jersey!

EVA: Yes, that's just it, doctor. Get father—(Mr. KING enters.)

MR. KING: Hello, Delamater. Are you still treating Uncle Horace? Nothing the matter with him but imagination.

DOCTOR (*loath to lose a good case*): Well—er—he complains of not sleeping at night.

MR. KING: No, of course not. He sleeps all day instead.

DOCTOR: Er—or— It would be a good thing if you took a nap yourself in the afternoons, Mr. King.

MR. KING: Fine chance! Somebody's got to stay awake in this family and make some money.

DOCTOR: But if you get really ill—

And then, adroitly, the doctor suggests and questions and comments until Mr. King is convinced that he is a pretty sick man. He is most reluctant, however, to agree to the proposed trip to South America.

MR. KING (*in a hoarse whisper*): You don't think it's anything *organic*, doctor?

DOCTOR: Organic? Oh, no, no—certainly not.

MR. KING: Then what is it? Tell me frankly. (*Bracing himself*) The plain truth.

DOCTOR: Well—the basic trouble is a metabolic condition of the thyroids. I'm sure if I made a blood test, I'd find the hæmoglobloids greatly increased.

MR. KING (*weakly*): Thank you, doctor, thank you. Hæmoglobloids are bad things to get, are they?

DOCTOR: Not in their proper number—no. You must get *right* away—away from your business—away from your family.

MR. KING: Who's going to run things while I'm gone?

EVA: Oh, don't bother about us, daddy dear! Think of *yourself* for once. And you know, daddy, how you've always longed to go right into the land of romance and adventure!

MR. KING: Oh, yes, that's true—I should enjoy it all right. (*Patting Eva's hand*) You see, doctor. What did I tell you? At heart, she's a dear, sweet, unselfish girl. All right. I'll go. But that South American boat leaves to-morrow.

EVA: I'd better go and talk to Higgins about your packing. (*Exits.*)

MR. KING: You know, doctor, it's a funny thing how much better your family looks to you when you're getting ready to leave it. Honestly, I almost believe I'll miss them.

DOCTOR: I'll keep an eye on them for you, Mr. King.

MR. KING: That's right—especially Eva. And look out for that Scotch fortune hunter.

DOCTOR (*smiling*): Trust me. I hope you'll find us engaged when you get back.

MR. KING: I'll be very well satisfied if I do. Doctor, I trust you. I trust you implicitly.

DOCTOR: Oh, er—er—thanks, thanks—I'll stop in with a prescription later on.

Uncle Horace, who has been dozing in the alcove, comes to life and precipitates a discussion with his nephew as to which of them is the sicker man. Mr. King boasts of his symptoms until Uncle Horace can endure it no longer.

UNCLE HORACE: Well, James, let me tell you something. You're not sick. You've fallen for a put-up job. While I was there, trying to doze, I heard the family planning to get the doctor to send you away.

MR. KING: Rubbish! I don't believe it. Why should they want to send me away?

UNCLE HORACE: They're tired of your interfering and scolding and bullying—

MR. KING: *What?* Is that true? *Who* did you hear? Not Eva?

UNCLE HORACE: All of them—the whole lot. Eva and Julie and Abby and Clinton.

MR. KING: Well, I'm damned! Just wait—I'll talk to this family! I'll have something to say to the whole lot of you. Families are all alike. At any rate, rich men's families are—a bunch of ungrateful, idle wasters!

UNCLE HORACE: Don't get so violent. Think of my nerves!

MR. KING: Nerves! Your *nerve* you mean!

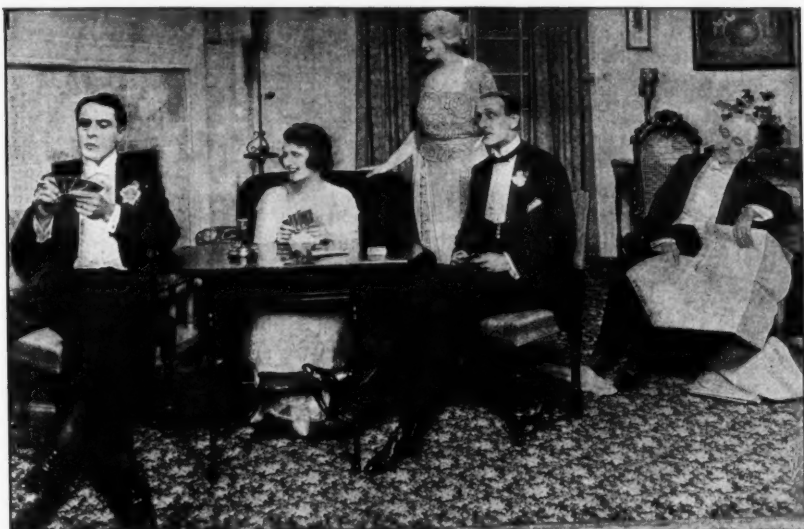
UNCLE HORACE: James, if you are rude to me, I shall leave your house.

MR. KING: Leave my house! Don't make me laugh. You came here to spend a week-end, and you've stayed fifteen years!

UNCLE HORACE: Well, I shall go—I shall go this very day! Good-by, James. I never thought, when I accepted your invitation for that week-end, that it would finish like this. (*Walks out of the room, his head very erect.*)

Meantime Mr. King has sent to his office for his young business manager, Mr. Adam Smith, recently returned from the Amazon plantations.

ADAM: I suppose you can hardly bring yourself to leave this place, and really I don't blame you.



LORD ANDREW: But the idea of being engaged sort of staggers a fellow if he's been a bachelor ever since he was born.

MR. KING: You like it here, eh?

ADAM: *Like it?* It's perfect. It's a home. It takes a homeless, lonely fellow like me to appreciate the way you're blessed. Mr. King! As I came up the drive and saw this lovely, big house, hedged about with honeysuckle and roses, and looking so sweet and peaceful, I just realized all I was missing in life. And then I turned the corner and saw your family sitting out on the porch—oh, but it must be wonderful to have a family!—and they looked so happy. They were all laughing.

MR. KING: *Laughing?* They were all laughing? *(Through his teeth)* Just wait—just wait!

ADAM: *(startled)*: I beg pardon, sir?

MR. KING: Nothing—nothing. I mean if you just wait you'll have a family yourself some day.

ADAM: I hope you're right, sir. You're simply not living when you've only got yourself. Can you imagine what it would be like to come home and not find your loved ones waiting for you with outstretched arms?

MR. KING: Outstretched *arms*? Outstretched *hands*, you mean. You know a lot about families, don't you? They made a pretty picture out there on the porch, did they? The smiling faces—I know why they

were smiling all right—and the sunshine filtering through the honeysuckle—and the soft-colored summer dresses. *(Snatches up a bill and hands it to ADAM.)* See that? The bill for those soft-colored summer dresses. How'd you like to pay that? Have you seen their hats? No, neither have I, but I've seen *this*. *(Hands him another bill.)* And here's the things they wear underneath. *(Hands lingerie bill.)* Sometimes on Monday afternoons I go out and sit in the clothes yard just to try and get my money's worth on the lingerie bill.

ADAM: If you'll pardon me, Mr. King, why do you encourage them to be so extravagant? You ought to speak to them.

MR. KING: Speak to them!

ADAM: I suppose you're afraid of hurting their feelings. But if you were very careful of the way you expressed it, all you need to do is just drop a hint. Love is a wonderful interpreter.

MR. KING: Say, where have you been all your life?

ADAM: For the most part I've been up at Manouse, looking after your rubber plants.

MR. KING: Adam, why can't we change places? I'll go to Manouse—if you'll take over my family. You're longing for a family, and I'm longing for a rest. I'll install you here as father. They don't think much

of me as a father, so I'd like to let them try a new one.

ADAM: If you'll pardon me, Mr. King, I think that is one of the wildest ideas I ever heard.

MR. KING: Not at all. It would be a liberal education for you—and, believe me, you need it. If you want to stop women from being extravagant all you need do is *drop a hint!* You long for the touch of a woman's hand, do you? You'll get it, boy, you'll get it, if you're not darn careful! You've done a lot for me, Adam. Your honesty and faithfulness have helped me to make a large fortune. So I'd like to do something for you. I want to open your eyes before you've landed yourself with a wife, a mother-in-law, and a couple of kids.

ADAM: But what would your family say to the scheme?

MR. KING: We don't need to care *what* they say. I've still got one hold over my family. They all sit up on their hind legs and "woof" when I hold out this little book.

ADAM: You rule them with a check book! That isn't right, Mr. King.

MR. KING: If you can discover any other way to rule them, I shall be most grateful. (EVA enters with LORD ANDREW GORDON. MR. KING introduces ADAM.)

EVA: I hope we're not disturbing a business chat, but Lord Andrew said he'd had a very strange note from you, dad.

LORD ANDREW: Oh, I say—not strange—*odd*. That's all I said—*odd*. But I understand. I know Mr. King is a bit off his feed. Do you know, I do deuced funny things when I get anything the matter with me? Seems to sort of go to my head, if you know what I mean.

MR. KING: Yes, we all have our weak spots.

LORD ANDREW: Exactly. Yours is liver. I can see that at a glance.

The good old pater used to get that same yellow look about the gills. Affected his disposish. Would even kick the dogs around if he couldn't find any of the family about.

EVA: Those were the times you all ought to have gone off and left him. The trouble with family life is that families are together too much.

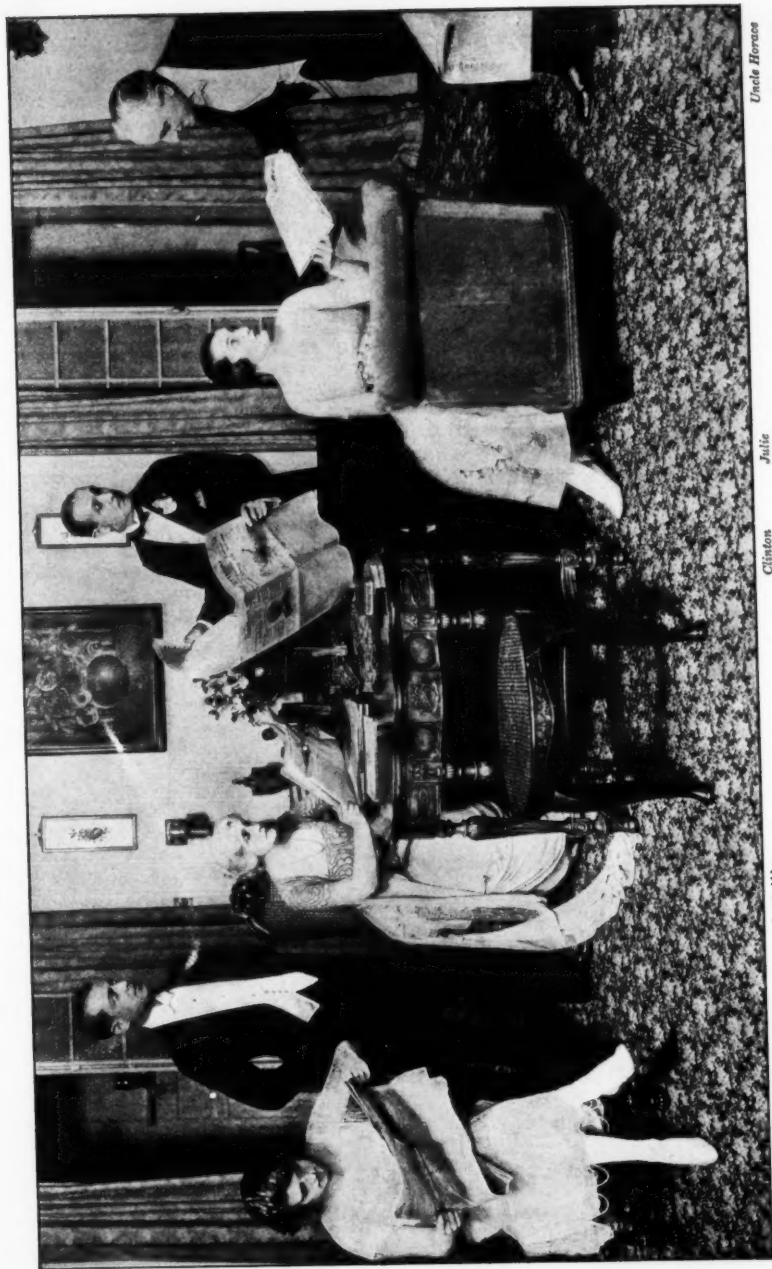
ADAM (*unable to resist*): The trouble with family life is that families aren't together enough. They don't learn to understand each other's tastes and feelings—they don't make love the interpreter of their crossed purposes—they forget the great lesson of bear and forbear. I beg your pardon, Miss King. I had no right to contradict you. I was sort of carried away.

EVA: That's all right, Mr. Smith. So you don't agree with my views on family life?

ADAM: No, Miss King, I don't. A family



ADAM: Don't, please! I can't bear that to-night of all nights you should speak of your home scoffingly, as though you didn't prize it.



Eve

Adam

Aunt Abby

Clinton

Julie

Uncle Horace

JULIE: Well, I suppose I ought to look for something, too. They probably won't give Clinton what he's worth—just at first. UNCLE HORACE: Let's hope they won't.



EVA: These jewels would be a big help to Dad. Take them back. I won't say a word to the others.

ADAM: You *mean* that? You're splendid!

is the greatest school in life, because it makes you learn to study the other fellow. I call the greatest adventure in the world to be able to climb down the chimney of some house, and then try to get on as well as possible with the people inside. And that's what happens to you the day you're born.

LORD ANDREW: I say, what did happen to you the day you were born?

ADAM: My people all died while I was a baby. I hadn't any family at all.

MR. KING: Cheer up! You soon will have.

EVA: Is Mr. Smith going to be married?

MR. KING: Not if I can save him from making that first fatal step, he isn't. (ABBY, JULIE, and CLINTON are summoned and introduced to ADAM. UNCLE HORACE returns.)

UNCLE HORACE: James, I've come to tell you that I was wrong. I said you weren't sick, but you must be. I realize that you wouldn't have spoken to me as you did if you were yourself.

MR. KING: So you're not going to leave me after all?

UNCLE HORACE: No. However rude you

were, I'm not going to desert the family in a crisis.

MR. KING: Oh, I see! You've decided to help them get rid of me, after all?

ABBY: Why, what do you mean, James?

MR. KING: It was a very pretty little plot to ship me off to the wilderness for three months so that you could all do just as you please.

JULIE: Why, father, surely you don't think—

MR. KING: No, I don't think, I *know*. Don't I, Horace? But don't worry. Even though I realize that it was only a bounce game, I'm going just the same. I may not need a rest, but I *want* a rest! And I want it bad. Only there's one alteration I'm going to make in your little scheme. You'd like to get rid of father. I'm sorry to have to tell you that you *need* a father. So here you are. From to-day on this family has got a new Dadda. (Indicates ADAM.) Here he is. Mr. Smith will be the head of this household while I'm gone. He will pay the bills and settle all domestic questions. I'm going to cancel all the charge accounts, and if

Mr. Smith doesn't approve your purchases, all your C. O. D.'s will be S O S's.

ABBY: But, James, this is all preposterous!

UNCLE HORACE: No, James, you're not sick—you're crazy.

LORD ANDREW: It fairly knocks me out—the poor old bean is just swimming.

JULIE: Oh, this is *too* humiliating!



JULIE: Oh, Clinnie, darlin'! I've been counting the minutes for you to come.

CLINTON: Really, Mr. King, you might show a little more consideration for one's feelings.

MR. KING: You showed a lot of consideration for me when you planned this nervous breakdown of mine with Doctor Delamater.

EVA: Do you know, I think it's a splendid idea! Dad deserves a vacation. We've led him an awful life. And I'm sure Mr. Smith will make a splendid father.

ADAM: Thank you. Really, Miss King, if you feel that way about it, I feel inclined to accept. Of course I appreciate it's rather a wild idea, but after all, you will want *some one* to lean on. You don't realize it, Mr. King, but you're going to be terribly lonely.

MR. KING: Don't realize it, don't I? Why, that's the whole reason I'm going. All my life I've been longing for it. Lonely! I'm going to try to be so blame' lonely that maybe I'll be able to understand why a man is darn fool enough to raise a family! I'm going up to pack. (*Exits.*)

ABBY (*after an awkward pause*): I'm sure Mr. Smith must feel as uncomfortable as we do.

ADAM (*hesitating, smiling, embarrassed*): Don't call me Mr. Smith. Call me—Adam.

EVA: Oh, no! I'm going to call you—*father!*

On an evening some two weeks later, Adam comes home from the office rather disheartened. He is greeted and waited upon by Corinthia, the very attractive housemaid, who evidently appreciates him more than do certain members of his "family." It is a relief to talk to some one.

ADAM: Corinthia, why do they dislike me so?

CORINTHIA: They don't—at least only Miss Julie and Mr. Clinton.

ADAM (*hopefully*): Clinton doesn't count much, does he?

CORINTHIA: I should say not! He'll never get round-shouldered carrying *his* brains about.

ADAM: There's one thing he's been picking on. Did you ever hear anything against tie clips, Corinthia? I thought they were all right till I heard Clinton DeWitt telling a party of people on the porch about my wearing a tie clip. The way they laughed you might have thought he'd said I wore a nightcap.

CORINTHIA: Don't you pay any attention to that oil can.

ADAM: Still, the way Mr. King fixed it,



Clinton

Julie

Corinthia

CLINTON: Say, what do you think of this suit? The chaps at the Calumet Club would drop dead if they saw me in it, but you should see the way it sells!

Clinton DeWitt is one of my family. And I suppose it's not very nice to knock your family, is it?

CORINTHIA: It mayn't be nice, but it's darned usual.

ADAM: I guess family life is different from what I imagined.

CORINTHIA: Yes, I guess you got your idea of families out of the Elsie books. Shall I take your raincoat, sir?

ADAM: You know, for years and years, I used to picture how it would be coming home from the office at night. There'd be your slippers warming in front of the fire, and your smoking jacket all ready to slip on, and smiling faces and loving greetings,

and little hands feeling in your pockets. I'm sorry, Corinthia, I'm just a sentimental idiot.

CORINTHIA: If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll get your slippers and jacket.

ADAM: No—no—you mustn't do that. Why, hullo—here they are!

CORINTHIA: That's funny. I wonder who could have put them there. Miss Eva was here when I came in to light the lamps.

ADAM: Eva! (*His face lights up at the thought.*) Then perhaps she— No, no, she wouldn't want to make me feel at home.

CORINTHIA: Would it make you feel happy to think she had put them there?

ADAM (*under his breath*): You bet!

When Eva comes in to consult her young "father" as to whether she

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EVA: Have a bite of my apple, Adam?

should marry Lord Andrew or Doctor Delamater, a hint is dropped that opens up a new line of thought for Adam.

EVA: You see, Lord Andrew hasn't proposed as yet. But a girl can always tell when a man is in love with her.

ADAM: *Always?*

EVA (*nodding*): *Always.*

ADAM: Well, if a girl knew a man was in love with her, and she were to encourage him a little bit, he might assume she wasn't angry at his caring for her. Suppose she put his slippers in front of the fireplace?

EVA: Oh, I see! You're thinking of poor Corinthia. I met her coming in here with your slippers and smoking jacket.

ADAM (*puzzled*): You mean—that Corinthia—

EVA: You didn't need that to tell you that Corinthia was crazy about you? But don't be alarmed. She realizes that there's a chasm between you.

ADAM: That wouldn't make a particle of difference if I loved her.

EVA: I don't know—I don't think it can be very nice to marry any one whose tastes and habits are on a different plane from your own.

ADAM: Oh, you wouldn't marry a man who—I understand. However, both the men you're considering have got the right tastes and habits, so that doesn't enter into your problem. Which one do you love?

EVA: I'm not sure that I love either. Neither the doctor nor Andy quite fill the bill. You see I like one for one thing, and the other for something else.

ADAM: If you could marry them both, they would add up about a hundred per cent. I see. I've met lots of ideal women—ideal fifty per cent of the time. But if I can't have my hundred-per-cent girl, I don't want any.

EVA: Oh, have you found a hundred-per-cent girl?

ADAM: I've carried a picture of one around with me a long time. She rode into my dreams when I was up the great river—she was just a dim phantom then. It's only lately that she's grown real to me. I don't want one woman to go to a polo match with me, and another to sit by my side when I hear beautiful music. I want *her* all the time—everywhere

I go. And most of all I want her to come home, too. For after all, it's the thought that the woman you love is waiting for you there that makes "home" the most beautiful word in all the languages of the world.

EVA: Why, father, I had no idea you were so romantic! (LORD ANDREW is announced.)

ADAM: I'm afraid I haven't helped you much to make a decision.

EVA: Yes—I think you have. (CORINTHIA enters with a large C. O. D. package, followed by JULIE.) A bill—not mine this time, but your older daughter, Julie's.

ADAM: I've just been going over the accounts, and I'm afraid we've been spending too much money. What's the amount?

EVA: Take a good brace. Julie's no piker when she starts an assault on capital. Four hundred and thirty-five.

JULIE: Oh, good evening, everybody! I came to see if my dress has arrived.

ADAM: I'm in a very awkward position, Mrs. DeWitt. This package was sent C. O. D.

JULIE: Well, what is the difficulty, Mr. Smith? Father supplied you with funds to pay our C. O. D.'s, didn't he?

ADAM: Yes, up to a certain amount. But

he's been gone only ten days, and we've already exceeded our month's allowance.

JULIE: Then we'll have to start drawing on next month's. Father grew quite used to that.

ADAM: Well, that was all right for him. But I don't see how I can do it. You see, he limited me, and I—I'm very sorry—

JULIE: Then you propose that I should send this dress back?

ADAM: I should think that would be the best solution, yes.

JULIE: And what do you suggest I should wear at dinner to-night?

own request for a hundred and fifty dollars—a sum she desires for the evening's card games. In a high temper, she invites Lord Andrew to accompany her out to the terrace. Adam is deeply distressed, and quite ready to be touched by Corinthia's kindness when she enters with his dinner on a tray.

ADAM: You saw how anxious Mrs. De Witt was not have me sit at table with her society friends, the Logans?



Uncle Horace

Clinton

Lord Andrew

Eva

Mr. King

Julie

MR. KING: Good heavens! You're all talking as if I'd gone broke.

ADAM: Really, I—that frock you have on looks very nice to me.

JULIE: A tea gown at dinner!

EVA: Don't be a chump, Julie. You know you've got a closet full of dinner gowns.

JULIE: That's no reason why I should be treated like a schoolgirl and humiliated by having my purchases sent back. To-morrow I'll take my pearls and pawn them. I think I can raise enough money to pay my bills until father returns! (Exits.)

Although Eva has no sympathy for Julie, she becomes hotly indignant when Adam politely but firmly refuses her

CORINTHIA: That was because she was sore at you for not paying for that dress.

ADAM: And Miss Eva is sore at me, too, because I asked her not to gamble. They both say they're going to pawn their jewels to-morrow so they can do what they like.

CORINTHIA: Yes, that's what they were always telling their father whenever he threatened not to give them money.

ADAM: Then they *do* treat me like a father, after all. Do you know, Corinthia, those two girls have been so spoiled it's a wonder that any one can live with 'em.

CORINTHIA: Well, it's Mr. King's own fault. If he had really wanted to turn his

children into something worth while, he'd have cut their allowances off altogether and made them get out and do some work.

ADAM: I wonder!

CORINTHIA: Yes, and that goes double for Clinton, and all the rest of the family. A lot of lazy birds that sit at home in the nest and wait for Mr. King to come and drop food in their mouths!

A telephone message to Adam brings the startling news that there has been a flurry in the rubber market, and that Mr. King has lost many thousands of dollars. A plan, wordlessly abetted by

Corinthia, is rapidly forming in Adam's head. While the family, with their guests, are dining, Adam is surprised to receive a call from Doctor Delamater.

DOCTOR (*looking around cautiously*): That Scotchman is still here, I suppose?

ADAM: Lord Andrew? Oh, yes, he's dining here.

DOCTOR: Mr. Smith, that fellow is a common fortune hunter. He's after Miss King because she's an heiress. Now, Mr. King asked me to look after Eva. But since you're here in *loco parentis*—

ADAM: Am I? I'm not up in medical terms, doctor.

DOCTOR: You're in the position of father.

ADAM: Oh, yes, I'm father, all right. But I'm afraid I haven't much influence over my family.

DOCTOR: Oh, I'm not going to ask you to forbid the match. I've thought of a way you can get rid of this adventurer. It's pretty drastic, I admit, but then the case is becoming desperate and calls for a desperate remedy.

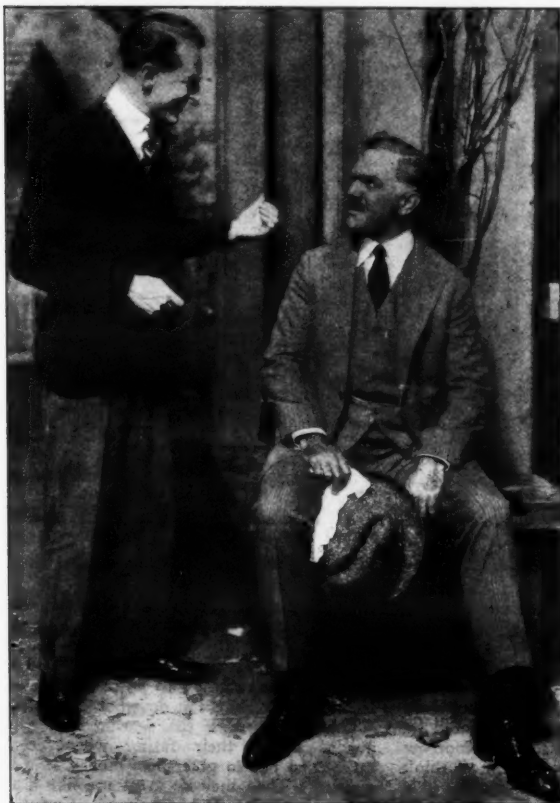
ADAM: All right, doctor. Prescribe.

DOCTOR: I see by the paper that there's been quite a flurry in the rubber market to-day. Mr. King was known to be a large speculator. Why not announce privately to the family that Mr. King is ruined? Eva will of course tell the Scotchman that she is penniless, and, as he is penniless, too, he'll be forced to show his real colors and back out as gracefully as he can.

ADAM (*slowly*): You know, doctor, it's a darned funny thing that you should propose this.

DOCTOR (*surprised*): Yes—why?

ADAM: Because Mr.



MR. KING: Do you mean to say—

ADAM: Yes, the story of the ruin was a fake. You are still rich, and can support them all as a crowd of spongers—if they will let you. But I miss my guess if they do.

King really is ruined. That little flurry you spoke about has wiped him out clean.

DOCTOR: Good heavens, man! Why, I'd always understood King was worth millions! And now you stand there and tell me he's lost *everything*!

ADAM: I'm afraid it's going to be an awful shock to the family.

DOCTOR: Shock? I should say it is a shock! Yes, of course—I'd better slip out before they come in—I couldn't talk to them now as if nothing had happened. (*Looks around room.*) All this gone—just think of it! What will they *do*?

ADAM: Well, doctor, I suppose Miss King will marry a man who can look after her.

DOCTOR: Yes—yes—she's an awfully attractive girl. Of course, some fellow is bound to come along. Oh—er—when you tell them, please say that if there's anything on earth I can do, to send for me.

ADAM: Thank you, doctor.

DOCTOR: And that check for my bill—I shall tear it up. I only wish I could do more but—(*confidentially*) my income is much smaller than people suppose.

ADAM: Well, there's just one bright side to this thing. Miss Eva will be quite safe from fortune hunters.

DOCTOR: Yes—yes—the Scotchman. I'd almost forgotten about him. He'll go, of course. Well, don't forget if there's anything I can do— Good night, Mr. Smith.

But out on the terrace, Lord Andrew has taken advantage of Eva's mood and become engaged to her. Later in the evening, after the congratulations are over, Adam bravely announces to the assembled family that Mr. King is ruined. There is a moment of hushed silence—it seems too incredible, too fantastic!—then an outburst of consternation and questioning.

ADAM: The Brazilian government placed an embargo on rubber shipments—that means a nation-wide shortage of raw material. This afternoon prices soared to the skies. The King Company is carrying a tremendous short account, and that account has got to be covered if it takes *every* dollar.

CLINTON: But look here: Brazil has no right to do this to us.

LORD ANDREW: No! I say, can't you get the good old U. S. A. to send some battle-ships? That's what we always do in England.

ABBY: Does it mean that *everything* has gone? His *private* fortune?

ADAM: I'm afraid there is no private fortune. It is all in the business. Perhaps we can save the home. I'm going to try. But it can't be kept up. We've got to rent it.

UNCLE HORACE: *Rent* it? Then where the devil are we going to live?

CLINTON: Good heavens! And *how* are we going to live?

ADAM: You'll have to do like other people, Mr. DeWitt, and find out how. Mr. King is over fifty years old. All his life he has worked for his family—for you. He has supported you—made a beautiful home for you—a home that none of you appreciate because you've never had to do without it. He's given you education, food, clothes—everything you asked for within reason, and a great deal that was out of reason. And now, after years of drudgery, of fighting and struggling for you, are you going to ask him to start in all over again—at his age—with a family hanging around his neck?

EVA: Of course we're not, Mr. Smith! Though I don't blame you for thinking us quite capable of it.

ADAM: I beg your pardon. I had no right to talk to you that way. After all, I'm only an outsider.

EVA: We'll be glad if you won't consider yourself an outsider. You see we're a dreadfully helpless crowd, and we shall need some one with business experience to advise us.

Julie comes rushing in with the startling announcement that her own and Eva's pearl necklaces and diamond rings have been stolen from the little safe upstairs.

EVA: Julie, we can't get very excited about your news. It seems a mere pin prick after the blow we've just received. Father has lost all his money—everything! (*JULIE collapses.*)

CLINTON: When you come to think of it, this robbery is a bit serious. You know, we could have lived a long time on the money those jewels would have fetched.

LORD ANDREW (*excitedly*): I'll run up and take a look at the scene of the crime. Perhaps I may pick up a clew. I'll take a good look around the flower beds for footprints. Who knows—those detective Johnnies may be jolly glad to have my coöper before I'm through. (*Exits.*)

UNCLE HORACE: I know the sort of detecting jobs *he'd* be equal to! Watching for shoplifters in a piano store.

EVA: Well, Julie, I guess our great announcement party will never come off—un-

less we use it to announce that the King family has gone broke.

ADAM: Why, do you think that Lord Andrew—

EVA: Will back out of the engagement? What is he to do? No, Mr. Smith, I don't think I'd better count on being supported by Lord Andrew Gordon. There's only one thing to do. We must all go to work.

ABBY: There's always Doctor Delamater, so you're all right. But I doubt if my matrimonial possibilities are very bright.

UNCLE HORACE: What about me? A peniless but warm-hearted bachelor, with a bad digestion and insomnia, would like to correspond with a rich widow. Object matrimony. I'd get a *hell* of a lot of answers to *that*!

CLINTON: That suggests something to me. Suppose we all look in the papers. I've often noticed whole pages of "Help Wanted" and "Business Opportunities."

JULIE (*admiringly*): Oh, Clinnie, what a man you are in an emergency!

Hardly able yet to realize the disaster, the entire family begins earnestly searching the "want" ads.

ADAM: Oh, here's something that may interest you, Mr. DeWitt. "Wanted: Clothing Salesman. Must be a snappy dresser."

CLINTON (*disgustedly*): *Snappy dresser!*

JULIE: Go on, Mr. Smith. How much does it pay?

ADAM (*continuing*): "Splendid terms to the right party. Exceptional opportunity to demonstrate our line of clothing novelties to the boys who like gingery effects. A side line of fancy belts, scarf pins, tie clips, and other gent's jewelry. Will net a live wire from seven to ten dollars a day. The New Era Clothing Company, Akron, Ohio."

JULIE: You'd better answer that one, dear. It says "exceptional opportunity." Now don't argue, Clinnie. If you're going to work, you can't afford to be too critical—can he, Mr. Smith?

ADAM: No. But I can't see Mr. DeWitt selling tie clips and other "gent's jewelry."

CLINTON: I'll do anything for Julie. (*Kisses her.*) Where is that ad?

As for Eva and Julie, suggestion after suggestion is made and discarded until Adam recollects the old place in New Jersey. He suggests that they all go down and turn it into a chicken farm.

ADAM: I mean on a large scale. For in-

stance, special brands of eggs for invalids, packed in fancy boxes and delivered by express. And honey, the same way. You and Mrs. DeWitt could run it. It would be better than some ill-paid job as a secretary or companion.

EVA: What a splendid idea!

JULIE: Yes, isn't it? And I know all about bees since I read that book of Maeterlinck's—"The Life of the Bee." So fascinating! And that part about the Queen Bee and her young lover is deliciously *risqué*! Poor dear, just like Cleopatra, she always murders him after the honeymoon. But those detectives will be here—I suppose I'd better tell Corinthia to tidy things up a little. I left the room in an awful mess. But no—I'll attend to it myself. I've got to learn to do without servants.

EVA: Bravo, Julie! There's some life in the King blood after all, Mr. Smith.

ADAM: I should say there is! You've all been wonderfully brave through this.

ABBY: I'm going upstairs and phone to my friend, Mrs. Wilcox. She has a gouty father, and I heard her say yesterday that he needs a combination housekeeper and invalid's companion.

EVA: That horrid old man! Oh, aunty, they say he's impossible to get along with!

ABBY: Well, I don't know. He can't be much worse than Horace. Good night, Lord Andrew. (*Exits.*)

EVA: Andy and I are just going to shake hands and say good-by.

LORD ANDREW: "Good-by?" I don't follow.

EVA: Don't let's pretend, Andy. You're too much of a gentleman, I know, to back out yourself, but it's no use, is it? You're poor—

LORD ANDREW: I know. I haven't a shilling, still—I say, look here! I'm going to make a confesh. I came over here to America with the idea of marrying money. But I've found out to-night that the money hasn't a dashed thing to do with the way I feel about you.

EVA: But, Andy—your family—surely they are counting on you.

LORD ANDREW: To bring home an heir-ess? Yes, I suppose they are. But then I've been a sore disappointment to my family from the very first. Will you believe it, they had it all planned out to christen me Victoria and marry me to a duke? If good old Smith will help me, I'm going to be naturalized and settle down in America and—and get a job. You won't think any the less of me for working, will you? And of course I'll have to drop the title—



LORD ANDREW: Congrats, Adam, old boy, an'-an' all that sort of thing. I say, that turkey smells devilish good!

EVA: Andy, you're a dear!

ADAM (*going to him, with outstretched hand*): Put it there, old man. I'll never say a word against the Scotch as long as I live!

Alone, Adam takes from his pocket a handful of pearl necklaces and jewels and looks about for a place to hide them. Just as he is dropping them into an envelope, Eva reenters. She is dumfounded, but quickly understands Adam's motive for "stealing" them. He hands the jewels to her.

EVA: These would be a big help to dad. You want us to keep them for him. That's it, isn't it?

ADAM: It will be great if you can!

EVA: Can? Of course we can! Take them back. I won't say a word to the others. I suppose we may have a rather hard time at first. It would be a temptation if they knew we still had these.

ADAM: You're splendid!

EVA: Oh, no! But we'll see if the Kings can't go through as Andy did. Good night, father, I just want to tell you how grateful I am for all you've done for me—for us—

When the curtain rises again it is Thanksgiving Day at the King farmhouse. The chicken-and-bee enterprise has been a tremendous success, and the family agree that they have spent the happiest summer of their lives. Julie, Eva, and Corinthia, aided by Adam, have built up a real business in eggs, honey, and prize poultry. Uncle Horace, an imaginary invalid no longer, has become an exceedingly active life-insurance agent, and Aunt Abby has married her gouty, rich old patient. Lord Andrew is just plain Andy Gordon, of Gordon's Livery Stables, and



UNCLE HORACE: Say, if you don't hurry, there'll be nothing left for you but the neck—I say, the neck!

still engaged to Eva, who keeps putting off the wedding day. But the transformation of Clinton into a successful salesman of snappy clothing—which he must needs wear himself—is perhaps

the most striking change that has taken place.

ADAM (*busy painting chicken coop*): Hello, Clinton! Why—why—you're perfectly magnificent!

CLINTON: Now don't start kidding me about my clothes. You know perfectly well I can't sell stuff like this if my customers see me dressed like an ordinary guy.

JULIE: Don't tease him, Adam. If you knew what a bitter pill it is to the poor dear to have to wear those clothes—

CLINTON: It was at first, but I'm getting used to them. In fact, I rather enjoy the sensation I create when I'm sitting in the front window of the Gardo or the Continental House. Do you know, they make special rates for me because they say I bring trade into the hotels?

ADAM: The boys drop in to look you over? Well, you're a *sport*, Clinton, in more ways than one. (*CLINTON and JULIE go out to get dinner. EVA enters, carrying a bowl of corn meal for the chickens and eating a big red apple.*)

EVA: I'll bet I was up before you this morning. I took a little ride with Andy. It was lovely—the air like crystal, and that nice woody smell that comes in the late fall! Do you know I really love this place, Adam? And our funny little gray house makes me understand what you used to mean when you talked with so much feeling about a home.

ADAM: Yes, it'll be nice to look back at this time we've all spent out here together. Andy is doing pretty well now, isn't he?

EVA: He's getting on.

ADAM: Well, when is it going to be?

EVA: The wedding, you mean? Oh, not for a long time yet.

ADAM (*painting mechanically*): But isn't he getting pretty anxious? I know if I loved a girl, I simply couldn't wait for the day when I could really call her mine.

EVA: If you loved? I thought you told me once that you had found the woman you'd always dreamed of. Your hundred-per-cent girl, you called her.

ADAM: Did I say that?

EVA: Yes, but maybe she turned out not to be a hundred per cent, after all.

ADAM: No. She turned out even better than I expected. Too good—too good for me.

EVA: I don't believe that. Does this female paragon realize that you think so highly of her?

ADAM: No, sir! I should say not! And what's more, she never will!

EVA: Too bad! Have a bite of my apple, Adam?

Meanwhile, kind-hearted Corinthia, who likes Adam herself, and cannot bear to see him unhappy, tells Andy that Adam and Eva are in love with each other. To Andy the idea seems incredible.

ANDY: You may be right about that fellow Smith—dash it all, anybody would be likely to fall in love with Eva!—but Eva in love with him? Oh, no!

CORINTHIA: You feel sure that she's in love with you?

ANDY: Well, I won't say that it's a great romantic pash, but, dash it all, if she weren't fond of me, she wouldn't be marrying me, would she? I've dropped the blessed title, you know—No, frankly, I don't believe it.

To the surprise and delight of everybody, Mr. King arrives from his trip, utterly tired of peace and quiet, and anxious to see his family. It is a warm welcome that he receives, even if it does leave him decidedly dazed and mystified. He begins to understand how poor old Rip Van Winkle felt.

UNCLE HORACE (*approaching alertly, brief case in hand*): Do you know, James, you're looking pretty yellow?

MR. KING: I'm sunburned.

UNCLE HORACE: It's not a healthy sunburn.

MR. KING: What are you trying to do—make me think I'm ill again? You can't pull that over on me a second time.

UNCLE HORACE (*taking large envelope from his pocket*): I don't say you're ill, but you never can tell what may happen to you. At your leisure look over this pamphlet. (*Hands him insurance leaflet.*) Now, tell me, James, have you ever found out whether or not you are a first-class risk?

MR. KING: Good Lord! You people were bad enough when I went away, but at least you hadn't begun to take an interest in my life insurance.

UNCLE HORACE: No, we were a lot of careless butterflies, with no thought of the future, but we're different now. I said to the family the last time I was out here, "The first thing I mean to do when James returns is to see that he takes out as much insurance as the poor chap can afford."

MR. KING: Well, I'm damned! This is a nice reception for a man!

UNCLE HORACE (*taking leather folder from breast pocket and selecting a policy*): Now I have here a twenty-year endowment policy that is specially constructed for men of your age—

MR. KING: Don't tell me that you're a life-insurance agent?

UNCLE HORACE: What the deuce did you think I was—an elephant trainer? You evidently haven't been paying any attention to what I've been saying—

MR. KING: I thought your interest in the matter was solely that of a beneficiary. So you're actually *working*?

UNCLE HORACE: Of course I'm working!

Eva and Julie and Clinton break the news of the financial disaster to an astonished parent.

MR. KING: My last dollar! Nonsense! I only lost about seventy thousand in that little rubber panic.

Not until Adam enters, with a warm greeting for his employer, is the matter cleared up.

MR. KING: Smith, my family have just been telling me that the King family has gone to the devil.

ADAM: Bad business, isn't it? But, on the other hand, the bee-and-chicken industry is thriving.

MR. KING: Tell me straight out—how did it happen? You must have been gambling with futures.

ADAM: Yes, sir. Only it wasn't rubber futures I was gambling with, but human futures—the futures of all these people here.

MR. KING: Yes, if you have ruined me, you have ruined them.

ADAM: Good heavens! Look at them! Are they ruined? Look at Uncle Horace—why, he has even learned shorthand! Isn't it marvelous? And look at—my daughters—your daughters—our daughters. Aren't you proud of them? As a business man and a captain of industry, you're a marvel. But as a father, you're simply not in it with me.

MR. KING (*beginning to realize*): Do you mean to say—

ADAM: Yes, the story of the ruin was a fake. You are still rich, and can support them all as a crowd of spongers—if they will let you, but I miss my guess if they do.

CLINTON: To think this man faked up the whole story to make us work! Good heavens!

JULIE: Wasn't it a cute idea?

MR. KING: I can see *why* you did it, but I'm damned if I can see *how* you did it! I'm dazed, absolutely dazed.

UNCLE HORACE (*to ADAM*): Do you realize that we've got a perfect right to be damned sore at you?

ADAM: I suppose you have.

UNCLE HORACE: That doesn't help the fact that I've been spending three months at night school, studying shorthand, and answering to the nickname of *Methusalah*! I tell you there's just one way you can square yourself with me. Let me insure your life.

ADAM: All right—though I don't see the use. I'm not married, and I never shall be.

UNCLE HORACE: Knock wood, knock wood!

ANDY (*as the others—all but ADAM—go in*

to dinner): Eva, may I have a word with you? Why didn't you tell a fellow?

EVA: Tell you what?

ANDY: That you are in love with Adam. And that he's in love with you. I've been watching you both, and I've noticed a few things.

EVA: You noticed? Oh, no, Andy, you dear old silly, you couldn't notice anything of that sort. Not any more than Adam could.

ADAM: What! How's that?

ANDY: It—it's true enough, isn't it? (*EVA nods her head "yes."*) Then that's settled. It's been deuced worth while knowin' you, and bein' one of the family.

EVA: You'll always be that, Andy dear.

ANDY: Congrats, Adam, old boy, an'—an' all that sort of thing. (*Starts into house, whistling, with an attempt at jauntiness.*) I say, that turkey smells devilish good!

ADAM: Eva—I don't know what to say—it—it doesn't seem possible!

EVA: Maybe you don't love me. Do you? Or don't you?

ADAM (*taking her in his arms*): Oh, Eva—there aren't any words to tell you—

EVA (*a little later*): I think *maybe*, after we're married, we'll be like good old-fashioned countryfolk, and I'll always call you—"father."

UNCLE HORACE (*at window, with turkey bone in his hand*): Say, if you don't hurry, there'll be nothing left for you but the neck—I say, the neck!

CURTAIN.



"SAFETY FIRST"—IN JAPAN

A RETURNED traveler brings home the following Japanese rules, as "done into English" for the benefit of the foreign automobile driver in that country: "You must drive your automobile at the speed of eight knots per hour on the city roads, and at twelve knots per hour on the country roads.

"When you see the policeman throwing up his hands, you must not drive in front of him.

"When you get ahead of the passenger on foot or the horse, you must ring the horn.

"When you meet the cow or the horse speed slowly, and take care to ring the horn and not be afraid of them. Drive slowly when you meet the horse or the cattle, do not make them afraid, and carefully make the sound. If they are afraid of the sound, you must escape a little while at the side of the road till they pass away.

"Do not drive the motor car when you get drunk, and do not smoke on the driver seat."

WINIFRED ARNOLD.

Simon

By J. Storer Clouston

Author of "The Man from the Clouds," "The Spy in Black," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

The conclusion of the most clever and remarkable mystery story of the year,

WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.

Simon Rattar, a judicial official of a Scottish county, is a man of few words and precise habits. On a certain morning he acts in a manner that is wholly foreign to him. His housemaid, Mary MacLean, notices his strange look, and is concerned. Hesitatingly she tells him that, on the night before, a strange man was prowling on the grounds. The master takes this news quietly, and bids her say nothing of it. At the office, Mr. Rattar's clerk notices his changed manner. In conference at different times of the morning with Mr. Malcolm Cromarty, Mr. Ned Cromarty, of Stanesland, and Miss Cicely Farmond, all related to his chief client, Sir Reginald Cromarty, Simon displays marked reticence. He asks each to review his dealings with him, thereby to freshen his memory. At night, Mary MacLean is disturbed by strange noises in the house. Several days later, the death, in New York, of Simon's brother George is announced in the local paper. George, the family scapegrace, had once committed forgery, and escaped to America. Notice of the loss of Simon's signet ring also appears. In Sir Reginald's household, he and his wife, his financially embarrassed author-nephew, Malcolm, and Cicely Farmond, his brother's illegitimate daughter, make up the family circle. One night, Sir Reginald sits up late to read. In the morning he is found murdered, by Bisset, the butler.

Ned Cromarty interests himself in the clearing up of the mystery. Calling at Keldale, the Cromarty estate, he receives the details surrounding the murder from Bisset, who is keen to help. When he talks with Cicely and Malcolm, the latter appears highly nervous. The question of motive is minutely investigated, and the will of Sir Reginald reveals those who profit most largely by his death. Sir Malcolm gains most—the baronetcy as well as the bulk of the estate. It then develops that Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond are engaged. Meanwhile Simon Rattar, official prosecutor in the matter, displays a lassitude which irks Ned Cromarty. Not long afterward, a Mr. Carrington arrives in the vicinity, ostensibly to investigate shooting and fishing possibilities. He interests himself in the discussions of the Cromarty murder, which take place at the hotel where he is stopping. In conference with Simon, Carrington admits that he is a detective, engaged and paid by some one unknown to him. Questioned, Simon asserts that he is the man who has hired Carrington. Simon in no way attempts to divert suspicion from Malcolm and Cicely, but subtly encourages it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AT eleven o'clock next morning a motor car drove up to Keldale House and an exceedingly affable and pleasing stranger delivered a note from Mr. Simon Rattar to Mr. James Bisset. Even without an introduction, Mr. Carrington would have been welcome, for though Mr. Bisset's sway over Keldale House was by this time almost despotic, he had begun to find that despotism has its lonely side,

and he had begun to miss "the gentry." With an introduction, Mr. Carrington quickly discovered that Mr. Bisset and the mansion he supervised, were alike entirely at his disposal.

The preliminary discussion on the sporting possibilities of the estate and the probability of its being let next season impressed Mr. Bisset very favorably indeed, with his visitor; and then, when the conversation had passed very naturally to the late tragedy in the

The first installment of "Simon" appeared in the December number.

house, he was still further delighted to find that Mr. Carrington not only shared his own detective enthusiasm, but was vastly interested in his views on this particular mystery.

"Come along here, sir," said he. "We can just have a look at the library and I'll explain to you the principles."

"I'd like immensely to see the actual scene of the crime," said Mr. Carrington eagerly. "You are sure that Lady Cromarty won't object?"

"Not her," said Bisset. "She's never in this part of the house now. She'll be none the wiser anyhow."

This argument seemed to assure Mr. Carrington completely, and they went along to the library.

"Now," began Bisset, "I'll just explain to you the haill situation. Here where I'm laying this sofie cushion was the corp. Here where I'm standing the now was the wee table, and yon's the table itself."

To the disquisition that followed, Mr. Carrington listened with the most intelligent air. Bisset had by this time evolved quite a number of new theories, but the one feature common to them all was the hypothesis that the murderer must have come in by the window, and was certainly not an inmate of the household. His visitor said little till he had finished, and then he remarked:

"Well, Bisset, you don't seem to put much faith in the current theory."

"Meaning that Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond were concerned?" said Bisset indignantly. "That's just the ignorance of the uneducated masses, sir! The thing's physically impossible, as I've just been demonstrating!"

"I don't know much about these things," said he, "but I'm afraid I can't see the physical impossibility. It was very easy for any one in the house to come downstairs and open that door, and if Sir Reginald knew him, it would account for his silence and the absence of any kind of a struggle."

"But yon table and the windie being unfastened! And the mud I picked up myself, and the hearth brush!"

"They scarcely make it impossible."

"Well, sir," demanded the butler, "what's your own theory?"

Carrington said nothing for several minutes. He strolled up and down the room, looked at the table and the window, and at last asked:

"Do you remember quite distinctly what Sir Reginald looked like when you found him, the position of the body, and the condition of the clothes?"

"I see him lying there every night o' my life, just as plain as I see you now!"

"The feet were toward the door, just as though he had been facing the door when he was struck down?"

"Aye, but then my view is the body was moved——"

He was interrupted by a curious performance on Mr. Carrington's part. His visitor was, in fact, stretching himself out on the floor on the spot where Sir Reginald was found.

"He lay like this?" he asked.

"Aye, practically just like that, sir."

"Now, Bisset," said the recumbent visitor, "just have a very good look at me and tell me if you notice any difference between me and the body."

Bisset looked for a few seconds.

"Your clothes are no alike! The master's coat was kind of pulled up like about his shoulders and neck. Oh, and I mind now the tag for hanging it up was broken and sticking out."

Carrington sprang to his feet.

"The tag was not broken before he put on the coat?"

"It certainly was not that! But what's your deduction, sir?"

"What do you think yourself, Bisset? You saw how I threw myself down quite carelessly and yet my coat wasn't pulled up like that."

"Jove, sir!" cried the butler. "You mean the corp had been pulled along the floor by the shoulders!"

Carrington nodded.

"Then he had been killed near the windie!"

"Not too fast, not too fast!" smiled Carrington. "Your own first statement which I happened to read in a back number of the newspaper the other day said that the windows were all fastened when Sir Reginald came into the room."

"Ah, but I've been altering my opinion on that point, sir!"

"I'm afraid because a fastened window doesn't suit your theory."

"But the master might have opened it, thinking it was some one he knew."

"Sounds improbable."

"But not just absolutely impossible."

"No," said Carrington, still very thoughtfully. "Not impossible."

"Sir Reginald might never have seen it was a stranger till he was inside."

"Thin, Bisset; very thin. Why need the man have been a stranger at all?"

"But surely you're not believing yon story that it was Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond after a'?"

"Is it quite certain that those two are engaged?" he asked.

"They all say so," said Bisset.

"Have either of them admitted it?"

"No, sir."

"Why don't they acknowledge it now and get married?"

"They say it's because they daurna for fear of the scandal."

"They say again!" commented Carrington. "But, look here, Bisset, you have been in the house all the time. Did you think they were engaged?"

"Honestly, sir, I did not. There's nae doubt Sir Malcolm was sweet on the young lady, but deil a sign of sweetness on him did I ever see in her!"

"Do they correspond now?"

"Hardly at a'. But of course folks just say they are feared to now."

"Has anybody asked either of them if they are, or ever were, engaged?"

"No, sir. But if they denied it now, folks would just say the same thing."

"Yes. I see. Naturally! Lady Cromarty believes it and is keeping Miss Farmond under her eye, the gossips tell me. Is that so?"

"Oh, that's true, right enough, sir."

"Who told Lady Cromarty?"

"That I do not know, sir."

Again the visitor seemed to be thinking, and again to cast his thoughts aside and take up a new aspect of the case.

"Supposing," he suggested, "we were to draw the curtains and light these candles for a few minutes? It might help us to realize the whole thing."

This suggestion pleased Mr. Bisset greatly, and in a minute or two the candles were lit and the curtains drawn.

"Put the table where it stood," said Carrington. "Now, which was Sir Reginald's chair? This?"

He sat in it and looked slowly round the darkened, candle-lit library.

"Now," said he, "suppose I was Sir Reginald, and there came a tap at that window, what would I do?"

"If you were the master, sir, you'd go straight to the windie to see who it was."

"I wouldn't get in a funk and ring the bell?"

"No fears!" said Bisset confidently.

"And any one who knew Sir Reginald at all well could count on his not giving the alarm then, if they tapped at the window?"

"They could that."

"Those curtains hang close against the window," observed Carrington. "A very slight gap in them would enable any one to get a good view of the room, if the blinds were not down. Were the blinds down that night?"

"The middle blind wasn't working!" he cried. "What a fool I've been not to think on the extraordinary significance of that fact! My, the deductions to be drawn! You've made it quite clear now, sir. The man tappit at that windie——"

"Steady, steady!" said Carrington,

smiling, and yet seriously. "Don't you go announcing that theory! If there's anything in it, mum's the word! But mind you, Bisset, it's only a bare possibility. There's no good evidence against the door theory yet."

"Not the table being cowpit and the body moved?"

"They might be explained."

He was thoughtful for a moment, and then said deliberately:

"I want—I mean you want certain evidence to exclude the door theory. Without that, the window theory remains a guess. Sir Malcolm is in London, I understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Likely to be coming north soon?"

"No word of it, sir."

Mr. Carrington reflected for a moment, and then rose and went toward the window.

"We can draw back the curtains now," said he.

He drew them as he spoke, and on the instant stepped involuntarily back, and down went the small table. Miss Cicely Farmond was standing just outside, evidently arrested by the drawn curtains. Her eyes opened very wide indeed, at the sight of Mr. Carrington, suddenly revealed. Her lips parted for an instant as though she would cry out, and then she hurried away.

Mr. Carrington seemed more upset by this incident than one would expect.

"What will they think of me!" he exclaimed. "You must be sure to tell Miss Farmond and Lady Cromarty, too, if she hears of this, that I came solely to inquire about the shootings and not to poke my nose into their library! Make that very explicit."

Even though assured by Bisset that the young lady was the most amiable person imaginable, he was continuing to lay stress on the point when his attention was abruptly diverted by the sight of another lady in deep black walking slowly away from the house.

"Is that Lady Cromarty?" he asked; and no sooner had Bisset said "yes" than the window was up and Mr. Carrington stepping out of it.

"I really must explain and apologize to her ladyship," said he.

"Her ladyship will never know——" began Bisset, but the surprising visitor was already hastening after the mourning figure.

"Lady Cromarty, I believe?" said the stranger in a deferential voice.

"Yes, Lady Cromarty," she said.

"Pardon me for disturbing you," said he. "It is a mere brief matter of business. I represent an insurance company to which Sir Malcolm Cromarty has made certain proposals. We are not perfectly satisfied with his statements, and from other sources learn that he is engaged to be married. I have come to ascertain whether that is the case."

Lady Cromarty was—as Mr. Carrington had shrewdly divined—no better versed in the intricate matter of insurance than the majority of her sex, and evidently perceived nothing very unusual in this inquiry.

"It is the case," said she.

"May I ask your ladyship's authority—in strict confidence, of course?" inquired the representative.

"I learned it from my own man of business," said she.

"Thank you," said the insurance representative. "I beg that your ladyship will say nothing of my call, and I shall undertake not to mention the source of my information," and with an adequate bow he returned to the house.

Before disappearing through her library window, Mr. Carrington saw that her ladyship's back was turned, and he then gave this candid, if somewhat sketchy, account of his interview to her butler.

"It suddenly struck me," said he, "that Lady Cromarty might think it somewhat unseemly of me to come inquiring about shooting so soon after



Miss Cicely Farmond was standing just outside, evidently arrested by the drawn curtains. Her lips parted for an instant as though she would cry out, and then she hurried away.

her bereavement; so I gave her a somewhat different explanation. She is not likely to make any further inquiries about me, and so you need say nothing about my visit."

He was careful, however, to impress on his friend, Mr. Bisset, that he actually had come from purely sporting motives. In fact, he professed some anxiety to get in touch with Sir Malcolm

on the subject, even though assured that the young baronet had nothing to do with the shootings.

"Ah, but it will gratify him, Bisset," said he, "and I think it is the nice thing to do. Could you give me his London address?"

He jotted this down in his pocket-book, and then as he was leaving, he said confidentially:

"You tell me that you think Sir Malcolm is interested in Miss Farmond, though she seemed not so keen on him?"

"That was the way of it, to my thinking," said Bisset. "And what deduction would you draw from that, sir?"

"I should deduce," said this sympathetic and intelligent visitor, "the probable appearance of certain evidence bearing on our theories, Bisset."

CHAPTER XXV.

The car took Mr. Carrington straight back to the town and dropped him at the door of Mr. Rattar's office.

"I shall want you again at two o'clock sharp," he said to the chauffeur.

He caught the lawyer just before he went out to lunch and said at once:

"I want to see Sir Malcolm Cromarty. Can you arrange for him to run up here for a day?"

Simon stared at him hard, and there seemed to be even more caution than usual in his eye; almost, indeed, a touch of suspicion. The lawyer was not looking quite as well as usual; there was a drawn look about the upper part of the face, and a hint of strain.

"Why do you want to see Sir Malcolm?" he inquired.

"Well," said Carrington, "the fact of the matter is, Mr. Rattar, that, as you yourself said, the direct evidence is practically nil, and one is forced to go a good deal by one's judgment of the people suspected or concerned."

"Very misleading."

"That depends entirely on one's judgment, or rather on one's instinct for distinguishing bad eggs from good. As a matter of observation, I don't find that certain types of men and women commit certain actions, and I do find that they are apt to commit others. And contrariwise with other types."

"Very unsafe doctrine," said Simon.

"Extremely, in the hands of any one who doesn't know how to apply it. On

the other hand, it can be made a short and common-sense cut to the truth in many cases. For instance, the man who suspected Mr. Bisset of committing the crime would simply be wasting his time and energy, even if there seemed to be evidence against him."

"Any man can commit any crime," said Simon dogmatically.

Carrington smiled.

"Personally," said he, "if you had a young and pretty wife, I am capable of running away with her, and possibly even of letting her persuade me to abscond with some of your property, but I am not capable of laying you out in cold blood and rifling that safe. And a good judge of men ought to be able to perceive this and not waste his time in trying to convict me of an offense I couldn't commit. On the other hand, if the crime was one that my type is apt to commit, he would be a fool to acquit me offhand, even if there was next to no evidence against me."

"Then you simply go by your impressions of people?"

"Far from it. A complete absence of motive would force me to acquit even the most promising-looking blackguard, unless, of course, there were some form of lunacy in his case. One must have motive and one must have evidence as well, but character is the short cut, if the circumstances permit you to use it. Sometimes, of course, they don't, but in this case they force me to depend on it very largely. Therefore, I want to see Sir Malcolm Cromarty."

The lawyer shook his head.

"No, no, Mr. Carrington," he said, "I can't bring him down here on such trivial grounds."

"But you yourself suspect him!"

"I think suspicion points to him; but what is wanted is *evidence*. You can't get evidence merely by bringing him here. You don't suppose he will confess, do you?"

"Have you ever studied the French

methods of getting at the truth?" inquired Carrington, and when Simon shook his head contemptuously, he added with some significance, "We can learn a good deal from our neighbors."

"Trivial grounds!" muttered Simon.

"I am investigating this case, Mr. Rattar, and I want to see Sir Malcolm. Will you send for him or not?"

"He wouldn't come."

"It depends on the urgency of the message."

"I can't invent bogus, urgent messages to my clients."

"I might do the inventing for you."

Again the lawyer stared at him, and again there was the same extreme caution in his eye, mingled with a hint of suspicion.

"I'll think about it," he said.

"I want to see him immediately."

"Call again to-morrow morning."

"Very well then, Mr. Rattar."

"By the way," said Simon, "you have been out to Keldale this morning?"

"Yes," said Carrington carelessly, "but there is really nothing new."

"No fresh evidence?"

"Not likely, after you and your sleuth-hounds had been over the ground!"

He went to the door, and—there Simon again spoke.

"What are you doing next?"

"Upon my word, I am rather wondering. I must think about it. Good morning."

For a man who was "rather wondering," Mr. Carrington's next movements were remarkably prompt. First he went straight to the post office and dispatched a wire. It was addressed to Sir Malcolm Cromarty, and it ran:

Come immediately urgent news don't answer please don't delay.

CICELY FARMOND.

The only thing that seemed to indicate a wondering and abstracted mind was the signature to this message. Instead of "Carrington," he had actually written "Cicely Farmond."

He then hurried to the hotel, which he reached at one-fifty. In ten minutes he had bolted a hasty lunch and at two o'clock was sitting in the car again.

"To Stanesland Castle," he commanded. "And be as quick as you can."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Carrington's interview with the laird of Stanesland began on much the same lines as his talk with Bisset. The amiable visitor was shown into the laird's smoking room—an apartment with vast walls like a dungeon, and on them trophies from the laird's adventurous days. Immediately he made inquiry whether Mr. Cromarty was disposed to let his shootings for next season, or if not, whether he could recommend any others.

As the visitor was in no hurry, he declared, to fix anything up, it was very natural that this conversation, like the morning's, should eventually turn to the great local mystery. After a while Carrington gave him an entertaining account of his efforts to assist Mr. Bisset, and then Ned asked:

"Well, what do you think of his theory that the man came in by the window?"

"Bisset is evidently extremely anxious to save the credit of the family."

"Good God!" Ned cried. "But do you mean to say that you think that story will hold water?"

"What story?"

"You know what I mean—the scandal that Sir Malcolm and—and a lady were concerned in the murder."

"They are said to have actually committed it, aren't they?"

Ned's eye began to look dangerous.

"Do you think it's credible?" he asked brusquely.

"You know them better than I. Do you think it is?"

"Not for an instant!"

"I haven't met Sir Malcolm," said

Carrington, wiping his eyeglass on his handkerchief. I can't judge of him. What sort of a fellow is he?"

"A bit of a young squirt," said Ned candidly, "but I'll not believe he's a murderer till I get some proof of it."

"And Miss Farmond? Is she at all a murderous lady?"

"I'll stake my life on her innocence!" said Ned, and it was hard to know whether his manner, as he said this, should be termed fierce or solemn.

For the space of perhaps two seconds Carrington's eyeglass stared very straight at him, and immediately afterward was taken out for cleaning again, while its owner seemed to have found some new food for thought. The silence was broken by Ned asking brusquely:

"Don't you believe me?"

Again his visitor fixed the monocle in his eye, and he answered now very quietly and deliberately:

"I happened to meet a young lady one afternoon, whom I discovered to be Miss Farmond. My own impression, for what it is worth, is that it would be mere waste of time to investigate the suspicion against her, supposing, that is, that one were a detective or anything of that kind engaged in this case."

"You think she is innocent?"

"I am quite certain of it, so far as I am any judge."

"And Sir Malcolm?" inquired Ned.

"I have no means of judging yet."

"Do you expect to get hold of a means?"

Carrington's smile was his only answer to the question. And then, still smiling, he said:

"I rather wonder, Mr. Cromarty, that you who have taken so much interest in this case, and who are, I am told, the head of the family, don't get some professional assistance."

Ned's mouth shut hard and his eyes turned to the fire.

"Well, that's worth thinking over."

Carrington's shoulders moved in an almost imperceptible shrug, but he made no comment aloud. In a moment Ned said:

"Supposing those two are scored out, there doesn't seem to be anybody else inside the house who could have committed the crime, does there? You wouldn't suspect Lady Cromarty or Bisset, would you?"

"Lady Cromarty is physically incapable of giving her husband the blow he must have received. Besides, they were a very devoted couple, I understand, and she gained nothing by his death—lost, in fact. As for Bisset—" Carrington let his smile finish the sentence.

"Then it must have been some one from outside, but who?"

"Can you think of any one?"

"Can you?" countered Ned.

"Me?" said his visitor, with an innocent air, and yet with a twinkle for an instant in his eye. "I am a mere stranger to the place, and if you and Mr. Rattar and the police are baffled, what can I suggest?"

"That's so, of course, Mr. Carrington. But since we happen to be talking about it—well, I guess I'm quite curious to know if any ideas have just happened to occur to you."

"Well," said the other, "between ourselves, Mr. Cromarty, and speaking quite confidentially, one idea has struck me very forcibly."

"What's that?" asked Ned eagerly.

"Simply this, that though it *might* be conceivable to think of somebody or other, the difficulty that stares me in the face is motive!"

"That's what has struck all of us."

"Sir Reginald was a popular landlord, I hear."

"The most popular in the county."

"This isn't Ireland," continued Carrington. "Tenants don't lay out their landlords on principle, and in this particular instance they would simply stand to lose by his death. Then take his

tradesmen, and his agent, and so on, they all stand to lose, too. An illicit love affair and a vengeful swain might be a conceivable theory, if his character gave color to it; but there's not a hint of that, and some rumor would have got about for certain if that had been the case."

"You may dismiss that," said Ned.

"Then there you are—what's the motive?"

"If one could think of a possible man, one could probably think of a possible motive."

A gong sounded and Ned rose.

"That means tea," said he. "We have it in my sister's room. Come up."

They went up the stone stair and turned into Miss Cromarty's boudoir. On her, Mr. Carrington produced a favorable impression that was evident at once. At all times she liked good-looking and agreeable gentlemen, and lately she had been suffering from a dearth of them. She had been suffering, also, from her brother's pigheaded refusal to reconsider his decision not to buy a car; and, finally, from the lack of some one to sympathize with her in this matter. In the opulent-looking and sportingly attired Mr. Carrington she quickly perceived a kindred spirit, and having a tongue that was not easily intimidated even by the formidable-looking laird, she launched into her grievance. They had been talking about the long distances that separated most of the mansions in the county.

"Isn't it ridiculous, Mr. Carrington," said she, "we haven't got a car!"

"Absurd," agreed Mr. Carrington.

"Do you know, this brother of mine here has actually come into a fortune, and yet he won't buy me even a wee, tiny, little mo' car!"

Ned frowned and muttered something that might have checked their visitor's reply, had he noticed the laird's displeasure, but for the moment he seemed to have become unobserving.

"Come into a fortune?" said he. "What a bit of luck! How much—a million—two millions?"

"Oh, not as much as that, worse luck! But quite enough to buy at least three decent cars if he was half a sportsman! And he won't get one!"

Mr. Carrington was now trying to balance his cake in his saucer, and was evidently too absorbed in his efforts to notice his host's waxing displeasure.

"In my experience," said he, "you can't get a decent car much under four hundred."

"Well," said she, "that's just the figure it would bring it to."

"Lilian!" muttered her brother.

But at that moment Mr. Carrington coughed, evidently over a cake crumb, and failed to hear the expostulation.

"But perhaps he is going to buy you something even handsomer, instead," he suggested.

"Is he!" she scoffed with a defiant eye on her brother. "I believe he's going to blue it in something too scandalous to talk about in mixed society! Anyhow, it's something too mysterious to tell me!"

By this time Ned's face was a thundercloud in which lightning was clearly imminent, but Mr. Carrington now recovered his wonted tact as suddenly as he had lost it.

"That reminds me of a very curious story I heard at my club the other day," he began, and in a few minutes the conversation was far away from Miss Cromarty's grievances. And then, having finished his cup of tea, he looked at his watch with an exclamation, and protested that he must depart.

As he lay back in his car he murmured with a satisfied smile:

"That's settled, anyhow!"

And then for the whole drive home he fell very thoughtful indeed. Only one incident aroused him, and that but for a moment. It was quite dark by this time, and somewhere between the

Keldale House lodge and the town, the lamps of the car swept for an instant over a girl riding a bicycle in the opposite direction. Carrington looked round quickly, and saw that she was Miss Cicely Farmond.

CHAPTER XXVII.

On the morning after his visit from Mr. Carrington, Ned Cromarty took his keeper with him and drove over to shoot on a friend's estate. He stayed for tea, and it was well after five o'clock and quite dark when he started on his long drive home. The road passed close to a wayside station.

"Train's up to time," said Ned to the keeper. "I thought we'd have got through before she came."

There was no moon, a fine rain hung in the air, and the night was already pitch dark.

At first, save for the distant rumble of the southward-bound train, there was no sign of life or of movement anywhere, and then, all at once, a figure on a bicycle appeared on the road, and in a moment dismounted beside the station. It was a girl in black, and at the sight of her, Ned bent forward suddenly in his driving seat and stared intently into the night. He saw her unstrap a small suit case from the bicycle and lead the bicycle into the station. A minute or two passed and then she emerged from the ticket office on to the platform, carrying the suit case in her hand. The bicycle she had evidently left in the station, and it seemed manifest that she was going by this train.

"That's Miss Farmond, sir, from Keldale House!" exclaimed the keeper.

His master said nothing, but kept his eye intently fixed on the girl. One of the platform lamps lit her plainly, and he thought she looked the most forlorn and moving sight that had ever stirred his heart. There was something shrinking in her attitude, and when she looked once for a few moments straight

toward him, there seemed to be something both sad and frightened in her face. Not another soul was on the platform, and seen in that patch of light against an immensity of dark, empty country and black sky, she gave him such an impression of friendlessness that he could scarcely stay in his seat. And all the while the roar of the oncoming train was growing louder and ever louder. In a few minutes she would be gone.

"I'm wondering where she'll be going at this time o' night with nae mair luggage than yon," said the keeper.

That decided it.

"Take the trap home and tell Miss Cromarty not to expect me to-night," said his master quickly. "Say I've gone—oh, anywhere you derved well like! There's something up and I'm going to see what it is."

He jumped quietly into the road just as the engine thundered between the gates in front. By the time the train was at rest, he was over the gate and making his way to the platform. He stopped in the darkness by the rear end of the train till he saw the figure in black disappear into a carriage, and then he stepped into a compartment near the guard's van.

"Haven't got a ticket, but I'll pay as I go along," he said to the guard.

The guard knew Mr. Cromarty well, and touched his cap, and then the train started and Mr. Cromarty was embarked upon what he confessed to himself was the blindest journey he had ever made in all his varied career.

Where was she going and why was she going? He asked himself these questions over and over again as he sat with a cigar between his teeth and his long legs stretched out on the opposite seat, and the train drove on into an ever wilder and more desolate land. It would be very many miles and a couple of hours or more before they reached any sort of conceivable destination for

her, and as a matter of fact, this train did not go beyond that destination. Then it struck him sharply that up till the end of last month the train had continued its southward journey. The alteration in the time-table was only a few days old. Possibly she was not aware of it, and had counted on traveling to—where? He knew where she had got to stop, but where had she meant to stop? Or where would she go to-morrow? And above all, why was she going at all?

As to the question of what business he had to be following Miss Farmond like this, he troubled his head about it not at all. If she needed him, here he was. If she didn't, he would clear out.

The stations were few and far between, and most desolate, improbable places as endings for Cicely Farmond's journey.

"She's going to find herself stuck for the night. That's about the size of it," he said to himself as they left the last station before the journey ended.

Though their next stop was the final stop, he did not open the carriage door when the train pulled up.

"I'm not going to worry her if she doesn't need me," he said to himself.

He saw the slip of a figure in black talking to the station master.

"Weel, miss," he overheard the station master say, "I'm sorry ye're disappointed, but it's no me that has stoppit the train. It's aff for the winter. If ye turn to the left ye'll fin' the hotel."

The girl looked round her slowly, and it seemed to Ned that the way she did it epitomized disappointment and desolation, and then she hurried on.

He was out of the carriage and after her in an instant. Beyond the station the darkness was intense and he had almost passed a road branching to the left without seeing it. He stopped and was going to turn down it when it struck him the silence was intense

that way, but that there was a light sound of retreating footsteps straight ahead.

"She's missed the turning!" he said to himself, and followed the footsteps.

In a little he could see her against the sky, a dim, hurrying figure. His own stride quickened.

At the sound of his footsteps he could see that she glanced over her shoulder and made the more haste till she was almost running. And then as she heard the pursuing steps always nearer she suddenly slackened speed.

"Miss Farmond!" said he.

He could hear her gasp as she stopped short and turned sharply.

"It's only me—Ned Cromarty."

And then he started in turn, for instead of showing relief she gave a half-smothered, little cry and shrank away from him. For a moment there was dead silence and then he said:

"I only mean to help you. Are you looking for the hotel?"

"Yes," she said in a frightened voice.

"Well," said he, "I guess you'd walk till morning before you reached a hotel along this road. You missed the turning at the station. Give me your bag."

She let him take the suit case and she turned back with him, but it struck him painfully that her docility was like that of a frightened animal.

"Where are you bound for?"

She murmured something that he could not catch, and then they fell altogether silent.

"Now Miss Farmond," said he, "we are getting near this pub and as we've both got to spend the night there, you'll please observe these few short and simple rules. I'm your uncle—Uncle Ned. D'you see?"

"Yes, I see."

"My full name is Mr. Ned Dawkins, and you're Louisa Dawkins, my niece. Just call me 'Uncle Ned' and leave me to do the talking. We were touring this beautiful country and I've lost my lug-

gage, owing to the derved foolishness of the railroad officials here. And then when we've had a little bit of dinner you can tell me, if you like, why you've eloped and why you've got a down on me. Or, if you don't like to, well, you needn't. Ah, here's the pub at last."

He threw open the door and in a loud and cheerful voice cried:

"Well, here we are, Louisa. Walk right in, my dear!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

His friends would scarcely have picked out Mr. Ned Cromarty of Stanesland as likely to make a distinguished actor, but they might have changed their opinion had they heard him breezily announce himself as Mr. Dawkins from Liverpool and curse the Scottish railways which had lost his luggage for him. It is true that the landlord looked at him a trifle askance and that the landlady and her maid exchanged a knowing smile when he ordered a room for his niece Louisa, but few people shut up in a little country inn with such a formidable-looking, loud-voiced giant, would have ventured to question his statements openly, and the equanimity of Mr. Dawkins remained undisturbed.

"Sit right down, Louisa!" he commanded, when dinner was served; and then, addressing the maid, "You needn't wait. We'll ring when we need you."

But the moment she had gone, he checked a strong expression.

"Damn—confound it!" he cried. "I ought to have remembered to say grace! That would have given just the finishing touch to the Uncle Ned business."

When dinner was over he pushed back his chair and crossed his knees.

"Now, Louisa, I'm going to take an uncle's privilege of lighting my pipe before I begin to talk, if you don't mind."

He lit his pipe, and, suddenly dropping the rôle of uncle, said gently:

"I don't want to press you with any questions that you don't want to answer, but if you need a friend of any sort, size, or description, here I am." He paused, and then asked still more gently, "Are you afraid of me?"

"Partly afraid."

"And partly what else?"

"Partly puzzled and partly ashamed."

"Ashamed!" he exclaimed with a note of protest. "Ashamed of what?"

"The exhibition I've made of myself," she said, her voice still very low.

"Well," he smiled, "that's a matter of opinion. But why are you afraid?"

"Oh," she exclaimed. "You know, of course!"

"I pass; I can't play to that!" he replied. "I honestly do not know."

"That's what I meant when I said I was puzzled. You *must* know——"

"Look here," said he, "some one's got to solve this mystery, and I'll risk a leading question. Why did you run away?"

"Because of what you have been doing!"

"I been doing! And what have I been doing?"

"Suspecting me and setting a detective to watch me!"

"This is going to be a derved complicated business. Just you begin at the beginning, please, and let's see how things stand. Who told you I was setting a detective on to you?"

"I found out myself I was being watched."

"How and when?"

She hesitated.

"Come, Louisa!" he said. "No nonsense this time! We've got to have this out or my name's Dawkins!"

For the first time she smiled spontaneously, and the doubtful look almost vanished.

"I only discovered for the first time the wicked suspicion about poor Malcolm," she said, "when I met a gentleman a few days ago who told me he

had heard Malcolm was arrested for the murder of Sir Reginald."

"But that's not true!" cried Ned.

"No, and he admitted it was only a story he had heard at the hotel, but it suddenly seemed to throw light on several things I hadn't been able to understand. I spoke to Lady Cromarty about it, and then I actually found that I was suspected, too!"

"Did she tell you so?"

"Not in so many words, but I knew what was in her mind. And then the very next day I caught the same man examining the library with Bisset and I saw him out of the window, follow Lady Cromarty and speak to her, and then I knew he was a detective!"

"How did you know?"

"Oh, by instinct, and I was right! The position was so horrible, so unbearable, that I went in to see Mr. Rattar about it."

"Why Rattar?"

"Because he is the family lawyer, and he's also investigating the case, and I thought, of course, he was employing the detective. And Mr. Rattar told me you were really employing him. Are you?"

There was a pleading note in this question, a longing to hear the answer "No," that seemed to affect Ned.

"It's all right, Miss Farmond! Don't you worry! I got that man down here to clear you—just for that purpose and no other!"

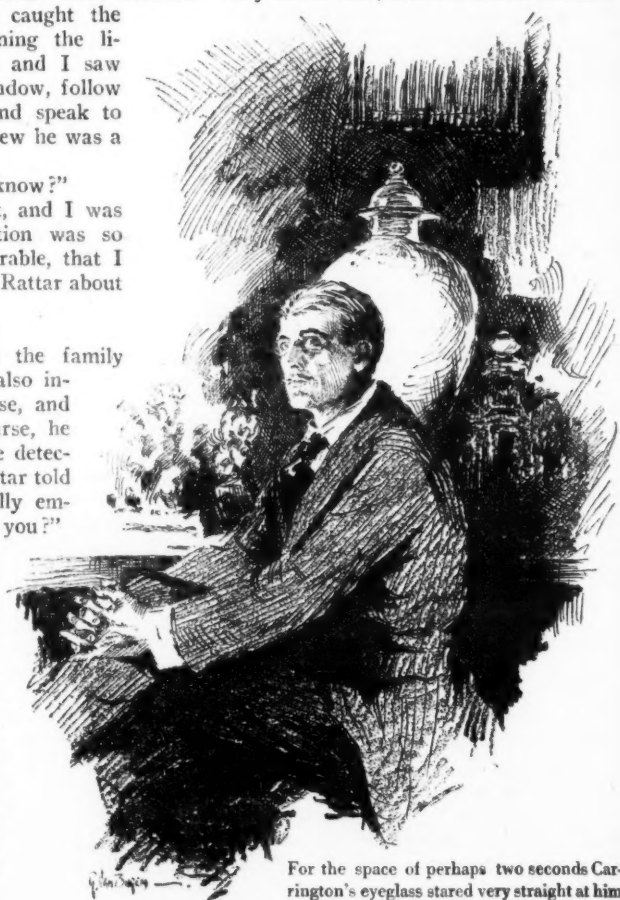
"But," she exclaimed, "Mr. Rattar said you suspected Malcolm and me, and were determined to prove our guilt!"

"Simon Rattar said that!"

There was something so menacing in his voice that Cicely shrank back.

"Do you mean to tell me, honor bright, that Simon Rattar told you that lie in so many words?"

"Yes," she said, "he did, indeed. And he said that this Mr. Carrington was a very clever man, and was almost certain



For the space of perhaps two seconds Carrington's eyeglass stared very straight at him

to trump up a very strong case against us, and so he advised me to go away."

"He actually advised you to bolt?"

"To slip away quietly to London and stay in a hotel he recommended till I heard from him. He said you had sworn to track down the criminals and hang them with your own hands, and so when I saw you suddenly come up behind me in that dark road to-night—oh, you've no idea how terrified I was! Mr. Rattar had frightened away all the nerve I ever had, and then when I thought I was safely away, you suddenly came up behind me in that dark road!"

"You poor little——" he began, laying his hand upon hers, and then he remembered Sir Malcolm and altered his sentence into, "You know now that was all one infernal pack of lies, don't you?"

"I believe every word you tell me!"

"Well, then," said Ned, "I tell you that I got this fellow Carrington down to take up the case so that I could clear you in the first place, and find the right man in the second. So as to give him an absolute, clear field, he wasn't told who was employing him, and then he could suspect me myself if he wanted to. As a matter of fact, I rather think he has guessed who's running him. Anyhow, yesterday afternoon he told me straight and emphatically that he knew you were innocent. So you've run away a day too late!"

"But what did Mr. Rattar mean by saying you had engaged the detective because you suspected Malcolm and me?"

"That's precisely what I want to find out," said Ned grimly. "He could guess easy enough who was employing Carrington, because I had suggested getting a detective, only Simon wouldn't rise to it. But as to saying I suspected you, he knew that was a lie, and I can only suspect he's getting a little tired of life."

They talked on for a little longer, still sitting by the table, with her eyes now constantly smiling into his, until at last he had to remind himself so vigorously of the absent and lucky baronet that the pleasure began to ebb.

Next morning they faced one another in a homeward-bound train.

"What shall I say to Lady Cromarty?" she asked.

"Tell her the truth. Lies don't pay in the long run. I can bear witness to this part of the story, and to the Carrington part if necessary, though I don't want to give him away."

"Oh, no!" she said, "we mustn't interfere with him. But supposing Lady Cromarty doesn't believe——"

"Come straight to Stanesland!"

"Run away again?"

"It's the direction you run in that matters," said he. "Now, mind you, that's understood!"

She was silent for a little.

"I can't understand why these horrible stories associate Malcolm and me. Why should we have conspired to do such a dreadful thing?"

"Because—well, being engaged to him."

"Engaged to Malcolm! Whatever put that into people's heads?"

"What!" he cried. "Aren't you?"

"Good gracious, *no*! Was *that* the reason, then?"

He seemed too lost in his own thoughts to answer her.

"Who can have started such a story?"

"Who started it?" he repeated, and then was immersed in thought again.

"Well, anyhow," he cried in a minute or two, "we're out of that wood! Aren't we, Louisa?"

"Yes, Uncle Ned," she smiled back.

And then before he had realized where they were, they had stopped at a station, and she was exclaiming:

"Oh, I must get out here! I've left my bike in the station!"

"Look here," said he, with his hand on the door handle, "before you go you've got to swear that you'll come straight to Stanesland if there's another particle of trouble. Swear?"

"But what about Miss Cromarty?"

"Miss Cromarty will say precisely the same as I do," he said with a curiously significant emphasis. "So, now, I don't open this door till you promise!"

"I promise!" said she, and a minute later she was standing on the platform.

"I half wish I'd risked it!" he said to himself with a sigh as the train moved on, and then he ruminated with an expression on his face that seemed to suggest a risk merely deferred.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ned found his sister in her room.

"Well, Ned," she asked, "where on earth have you been?"

He shut the door before he answered, and then came up to the fireplace, and planted himself in front of her.

"Who told you that Cicely Farmond was engaged to Malcolm Cromarty?"

"Don't eat my head off, Neddy! How can I remember?"

"You've got to remember," said her brother grimly. "And you'd better be careful what you tell me, for I'll go straight to the woman, or man, you name."

"I don't know if you are aware of it, but this isn't the way I'm accustomed to be talked to."

"It's the way you're being talked to now," said he. "Who told you?"

"I absolutely refuse to answer if you speak to me like that, Ned!"

"Then we part company, Lilian."

There was no doubt about the apprehension in her eye now.

"I—I don't know who told me."

"Did anybody tell you, or did you make it up?"

"I never actually said they were engaged."

He looked at her in silence.

"I won't ask you why you deceived me, Lilian, but it was a low-down trick to play on me, and it has turned out to be a damned cruel trick to play on that girl. I mentioned the engagement as a mere matter of course to somebody, and though I mentioned it confidentially, it started this slander about Malcolm Cromarty and Cicely Farmond conspiring to murder, to *murder*, Lilian, the man of all men they owed most to. That's what you've done!"

"I—I am very sorry, Ned!"

"The latest consequence has been," he said sternly, "that through a mixture of persecution and bad advice she has been driven to run away. Luckily, I spotted her at the start and fetched her back, and I've told her that if there is the least little bit more trouble she is to come straight here, and that you will give her as good a welcome as I shall. Is that quite clear?"

"Yes," she murmured.

"Otherwise," said he, "there's no room for us both here. One single suggestion that she isn't welcome and you have full warning now of the consequences!"

"When is she coming?" she asked.

"When? Possibly never. But there's some very fishy and, it looks to me, some very dirty business going on, and this port stands open in case of a storm. You fully understand?"

"Of course I do," she said. "I'm not quite a fool!"

"Well, that's all," said Ned.

"Who did you tell it to, Ned?"

"Simon Rattar."

"Then he has spread this dreadful story!" she exclaimed.

"By Heaven, I've scarcely had time to think it all out yet, but it looks like it!"

"It *must* be that nasty, grumpy, old creature! If you told nobody else—well, it can't be anybody else!"

"But why should he go and spread such a story?"

"Because he wants to shelter some one else!"

"Who?"

"Ah, that's for the police to find out. But I'm quite certain, Ned, that that pigheaded old Simon, with his codfish eyes and his everlasting grunt, is at the bottom of it all!"

"Well," he said slowly, "he has certainly been asking for trouble in one or two ways, and this seems another invitation. But he'll get it, sure! At the same time, what's his object?"

"Either to make money or hide something disgraceful. You really must inquire into this, Ned!"

He dropped into a chair and sat for a few minutes with his face in his hands. At last he looked up.

"I'm out of my depth," he said. "I guess I'd better see Carrington."

"Mr. Carrington?" she exclaimed.

"I had a long talk with him," he explained. "He seems an uncommon shrewd fellow!"

She looked at him curiously, but evidently judged it tactful, in the present delicate situation, to ask no more.

"What a dreadful thing of Simon Rattar to do! Wasn't it, Ned?"

"The whole thing has been damnable!"

As the door closed behind him she made a little grimace again and then gave a little shrug.

"He's going to marry her!" she said to herself, and acting immediately on a happy inspiration, sat down to write a long and affectionate letter to an old friend whose country house might, with judicious management, be considered good for a six months' visit.

CHAPTER XXX.

The unexpected energy displayed by her charming guest in bustling all over the country had surprised and a little perplexed Miss Peterkin, but she now decided that it was only a passing phase, for on the day following his visits to

Keldale and Stanesland he exhibited exactly the same leisurely calm she had admired at first. He sought out the local golf course and for an hour or two his creditable game confirmed his reputation as a sportsman, and for the rest of the time he idled in a very gentlemanly manner.

In the course of the afternoon he strolled out and gradually drifted through the dusk toward the station. Finding the train was, as usual, indefinitely late, he strolled out again and finally drifted back just as the signals had fallen at last. It was quite dark by this time and the platform lamps were lit, but Mr. Carrington chanced to stand inconspicuously in a background of shadows. As the engine hissed ponderously under the station roof and the carriage doors began to open, he still stood there, the most casual of spectators. A few passengers passed him, and then came a young man in a fur coat, on whom some very curious glances had been thrown when he alighted from his first-class compartment. Mr. Carrington, however, seemed to take no interest either in him or anybody else till the young man was actually passing him, and then he suddenly stepped out of the shadows, touched him on the shoulder, and said:

"Sir Malcolm Cromarty, I believe?"

The young man started violently.

"Ye-es, I am," he stammered.

"May I have a word with you?"

With a dreadfully nervous air Sir Malcolm accompanied him out into the dark road.

"What do you want with me?"

Carrington's voice suddenly resumed its usual cheerful note.

"Forgive me," he said, "for collaring you like this, but the fact is, I am very keen to see you about the Keldale shootings."

"Thank Heaven!" gasped Sir Malcolm. "Good Lord! what a fright you gave me!"

"I say, I'm awfully sorry!" said Carrington anxiously. "How frightfully stupid I must have been!"

"Oh, not at all," he said. "In fact, you must have wondered at my manner. The fact is, Mr.—er——"

"Carrington."

"—Mr. Carrington, that I'm in a most awful position at present. You know, of course, that I'm suspected of murder!"

"No!" exclaimed Carrington with vast interest. "Not really?"

"It's an absolute fact, suspected of murder! Good God! Just imagine it!"

The young baronet stopped and faced his new acquaintance dramatically.

"Yes," he said, "I, the head of an ancient and honorable house, am actually suspected of having murdered my cousin, Sir Reginald Cromarty!"

"What, that murder?" exclaimed Carrington. "By Jove! Of course, I've heard a lot about the case. And you are really suspected?"

"So much so," said the baronet darkly, "that when you touched me on the shoulder I actually thought you were going to arrest me!"

Carrington seemed equally astounded and penitent at this unfortunate reading of his simple and natural action.

"How very tactless of me!" he repeated more than once. "Really, I must be more careful another time!"

And then he suddenly turned his monocle to the baronet and inquired:

"But how do you know you are suspected?"

"How do I know! My God, all fingers are pointing at me! Even in my club in London I feel I am a marked man. I have discussed my awful position with all my friends, and by this time they tell me that everybody else knows, too!"

"That is—er—not unnatural," said Carrington dryly. "But how did you first learn?"

"I knew I should be suspected the

moment I heard of the crime! The very night before, perhaps at the actual moment when the deed was being done, I did a foolish thing!"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed his new friend.

"Yes, you may not believe me, but I acted like a damned silly ass. Mind you, I am not as a rule a silly ass," the baronet added with dignity, "but that night I actually confided in a woman!"

"What woman?"

"My relative, Miss Cicely Farmond—a charming girl, I may mention. There was every excuse for me; still, it was a rotten thing to do, I quite admit. I told her that I was hard up and feeling desperate, and I even said I was going to sit up late! And on top of that, Sir Reginald was murdered that very night. Imagine my sensations for the next few days, living in the same house with the woman who had heard me say *that*! She held my fate in her hands, but thank God, she evidently had such faith in my honor and humanity that she forbore to—er——"

"Peach," suggested Carrington. "Though as a matter of fact, I fancy she had forgotten all about it."

"Forgotten my words!" exclaimed the baronet indignantly. "Impossible! I can never forget them!"

"Well," said Carrington soothingly, "let us suppose she remembered them. Anyhow, she said nothing, and that being so, how did you first actually know that you were suspected?"

"My own man of business thought it his duty to drop me a hint!"

"Really!" said he in a curious voice. "And what course of action did he advise?"

"He advised me to keep away from the place. In fact, he even suggested I should go abroad, and by Jove, I'm going to!"

To this, Carrington made no reply at all. His thoughts, in fact, seemed to

have wandered entirely away from Sir Malcolm Cromarty. The baronet seemed a trifle disappointed at his lack of adequate interest.

"Don't you sympathize with me?"

"I beg your pardon," said Carrington, "my thoughts were wandering for the moment. I do sympathize. By the way, what are you going to do now?"

The baronet started.

"By Jove! my own thoughts are wandering," said he, "though I certainly have some excuse! I must get down to the King's Arms and order a trap to take me out to Keldale House as quickly as I can." And then he added mysteriously, "I only came down here because I was urgently wired for by some one who— Well, I couldn't refuse."

"I'm going to the King's Arms, too. We'll walk down together, if you don't mind."

"Delighted," said the baronet, "if you don't mind being seen with such a marked man."

"I rather like them marked," smiled Carrington.

All the way to the hotel the notorious Sir Malcolm pursued what had evidently become his favorite subject: the vast sensation he was causing in society and the pain it gave a gentleman of title and position to be placed in such a predicament. When they reached the King's Arms, his new acquaintance insisted in a very friendly and confident way that there was no immediate hurry about starting for Keldale, and that the baronet must come up to his sitting room first and have a little refreshment.

The effect of a couple of large glasses of sloe gin was quickly apparent. Sir Malcolm became decidedly happier and even more confidential. He was considerably taken aback, however, when his host suddenly asked:

"Are you quite sure you are really innocent?"

"Innocent!" exclaimed the baronet,

leaping out of his chair. "Do you mean to tell me you doubt it? Do you actually believe I am capable of killing a man in cold blood, especially the honored head of my own house?"

"No," said he, "I don't believe it."

"Then, sir," said the baronet haughtily, "kindly do not question my honor!"

This time Carrington allowed his smile to appear.

"Sit down, Sir Malcolm," he said. "Pull yourself together, and listen to a few words."

Sir Malcolm looked extremely surprised, but obeyed.

"What I am going to say is in the strictest confidence, and you must give me your word not to repeat it."

"I give you my word, sir."

"Well, then, in the first place, I am a detective."

For a few seconds Sir Malcolm stared at him in silence and then burst into a hearty laugh.

"Good egg, sir!" said he, "Good egg! If I had not finished my sloe gin I should drink to your health!"

It was Carrington's turn to look disconcerted. Recovering himself, he said with a smile:

"You shall have another glass of sloe gin when you have grasped the situation. I assure you I am actually a detective."

Sir Malcolm shook a knowing head.

"My dear fellow," said he, "you can't really pull my leg like that. I can see perfectly well you are a gentleman."

"I appreciate the compliment," said Carrington, "but just let me tell you what was in the telegram which has brought you here. It ran: 'Come immediately urgent news don't answer please don't delay. Cicely Farmond.'"

Sir Malcolm's mouth fell open.

"How—how do you know that?"

"Because I wrote it myself. Miss Farmond is quite unaware it was sent."

"But—er—why the devil, sir—"

"Because I am a detective," interrupted Carrington, "and I wished to see you."

"What about?"

"About this murder. I wanted to satisfy myself that you were or were not innocent."

"But—er—how?"

"By your actions, conversation, and appearance. I am now satisfied, Sir Malcolm."

"That I am innocent."

"Yes."

"Then will this be the end of my—er—painful position?"

"So far as your own anxiety goes, yes. You need no longer fear arrest."

"But won't people then—er—talk about me any longer?"

"I am afraid I can't prevent that, for a little longer."

The last of the baronet's worries seemed to disappear.

"Ah!" he said complacently. "Well, let them talk about me!"

"You tell me specifically that Mr. Rattar was the first person to inform you that suspicion was directed against you, and that he advised you to keep away, and for choice, to go abroad. There is no doubt about that, is there?"

"Well," said Sir Malcolm, "he didn't specifically advise me to go abroad, but his letter seemed to suggest it."

"Ah!" said Carrington.

"I am now going to take the liberty of suggesting your best course of action," he resumed. "In the first place, there is no object in your going out to Keldale House, so I think you had better not. In the second place, you had better call on Mr. Rattar first thing to-morrow and consult him about any point of business that strikes you as a sufficient reason for coming so far to see him. I may tell you that he has given you extremely bad advice, so you can be as offhand and brief with him as you like. Get out of his office, in fact, as quick as you can."

"That's what I always want to do," said the baronet. "I can't stick the old fellow at any price."

"If he asks you whether you have seen me, say you have just seen me, but didn't fancy me, and don't give him the least idea of what we talked about. You can add that you left the King's Arms because you didn't care for me."

"But am I to leave it?"

"It's better that we shouldn't stay in the same hotel. It will support your account of me. And finally, get back to London by the first train after you have seen Mr. Rattar."

"Then aren't you working with old Simon?" inquired Sir Malcolm.

"Oh, in a sense, I am," said Carrington carelessly, "but I dare say you have found him yourself an arbitrary, meddlesome old boy, and I like to be independent."

"By Jove, so do I," the baronet agreed cordially. "I am quite with you about old Silent Simon. I'll do just exactly as you suggest. He won't get any change out of me!"

"And now," said Carrington, "get your bag taken to any other hotel you like. I'll explain everything to Miss Peterkin."

That evening Mr. Carrington joined the choice spirits in the manageress' room, and they had a very long and entertaining gossip. The conversation turned this time chiefly on the subject of Mr. Simon Rattar, and if by the end of it the agreeable visitor was not fully acquainted with the history of that local celebrity, of his erring partner, and of his father before him, it was not the fault of Miss Peterkin and her friends.

CHAPTER XXXI.

On the morning after Sir Malcolm's fleeting visit to the King's Arms, the manageress was informed by her friend, Mr. Carrington, that he would like a car immediately after breakfast.

"I really must be a little more ener-

getic, or I'll never find anything to suit me," he smiled in his most leisurely manner. "I am thinking of running out to Keldale to have another look at

make up our minds, well, something generally happens!"

Circumstances, however, prevented this enthusiastic sportsman from making any further inquiry as to the letting of the Keldale shootings. When Bisset appeared at the front door, consternation was in his face. It was veiled under a restrained, professional manner, but not sufficiently to escape his visitor's eye.



"It's only me—Ned Cromarty," he said quietly. "I only mean to help you if you need a hand. Are you looking for the hotel?"

the place. It might be worth taking if they'd let it."

"But you've been to Keldale already, Mr. Carrington!" said Miss Peterkin. "I wonder you don't have a look at one of the other places."

"I'm one of those fellows who make up their minds slowly," he explained. "But when we cautious fellows do

"What's up?" he asked at once.

"Step in, sir, and I'll tell ye."

He led him into a small morning room.

"Miss Farmond has gone, sir!"

"Gone? When and how?"

"Run away, sir, on her bicycle yesterday afternoon and de'il a sign of her since!"

"Any luggage?"

"Just a wee suit case."

"No message left, or anything?"

"Not a word or a line, sir."

"The devil!" murmured Carrington.

"That's just exac'ly it, sir!"

"No known cause? No difficulty with Lady Cromarty or anything?"

"Nothing that's come to my ears, sir."

Carrington stared blankly into space and remained silent for several minutes. Bisset watched his assistant with growing anxiety.

"Surely, sir," he burst forth at last, "you're not thinking this goes to indicate any deductions or datas showing she's guilty?"

"I'm dashed if I know what to think," murmured Carrington.

Suddenly he turned his eyeglass on the other.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "the day before yesterday I passed that girl riding on a bicycle toward Keldale House after dark! Do you know where she had been?"

"Into the town, sir. I knew she was out, of course, and she just mentioned afterward where she had been."

"Have you any idea whom she saw or what she did?"

"I have no datas, sir; that's the plain fact."

"But you can't think of any likely errand to take her in so late in the afternoon?"

"No, sir. In fact, I mind thinking it was funny like her riding about alone in the dark like yon, for she's feared of being out by herself in the dark."

Carrington reflected.

"By the way," he asked, "can you remember if, by any chance, Sir Reginald had any difficulty or trouble or row of any kind with any one whatever during, say, the month previous to his death? I mean with any of the tenants,

or his tradesmen—or his lawyer? Take your time and think carefully."

Carrington dismissed his car at Mr. Rattar's office. When he was shown into the lawyer's room, he exhibited a greater air of keenness than usual.

"Well, Mr. Rattar," said he, "you'll be interested to hear that I've got rather a new point of view with regard to this case."

"Indeed?" said Simon, and his lips twitched a little as he spoke. There was no doubt that he was not looking so well as usual. His face had seemed drawn and worried last time Carrington had seen him; now it might almost be termed haggard.

"I find," continued Carrington, "that Sir Reginald displayed a curious and unaccountable irritability before his death. I hear, for instance, that a letter from you had upset him quite unduly."

Carrington paused for an instant, and his monocle was full on Simon all the time, and yet he did not seem to notice the very slight, but distinct, start which the lawyer gave.

"These seem to me very suggestive symptoms, Mr. Rattar, and I am wondering very seriously whether the solution of his mysterious death is not"—he paused for an instant and then in a low voice said—"suicide!"

There was no mistake about the lawyer's start this time, or about the curious fact that the strain seemed suddenly to relax, and a look of relief to take its place.

"That's rather a suggestive idea, isn't it?" said Carrington.

"Very!" replied Simon.

"How he managed to inflict precisely those injuries on himself is at present a little obscure," continued Carrington, "but no doubt a really expert medical opinion will be able to suggest an explanation. The theory fits all the other facts remarkably, doesn't it?"

"Remarkably," agreed Simon.

"This letter of yours, for instance, was a very ordinary business communication, I understand."

"Very ordinary," said Simon.

"Of course, you have a copy of it in your letter book, and also Sir Reginald's reply?"

There was a moment's pause and then Simon grunted reluctantly.

"May I see them?"

"You think they are important?"

"As bearing on Sir Reginald's state of mind only."

Simon rang his bell and ordered the letter book to be brought in. While Carrington was examining it, his eyes never left his visitor's face.

"According to these letters," he observed, "there seems to have been a trifling, but rather curious misunderstanding. In accordance with written instructions of a fortnight previously, you had arranged to let a certain farm to a certain man, and Sir Reginald then complained that you had overlooked a conversation between those dates in which he had canceled these instructions. He writes with a warmth that clearly indicates his own impression that this conversation had been perfectly explicit and that your forgetfulness or neglect of it was unaccountable, and he proposes to go into this and one or two other matters in the course of a conversation with you which should have taken place that afternoon. You then reply that you are too busy to come out so soon, but will call on the following morning. In the meantime, Sir Reginald is murdered, and so the conversation never takes place, and no explanation passes between you. Those are the facts, aren't they?"

He looked up from the letter book as he spoke, and there was no doubt he noticed something now. Indeed, the haggard look on Simon's face and a bead of perspiration on his forehead were so striking, and so singular in the case of such a tough customer, that the

least observant, or the most circumspect, would have stared. Carrington's stare lasted only for the fraction of a second.

"Sir Reginald was mistaken. No such conversation."

"Do you mean to tell me literally that no such conversation took place? Was it a mere delusion?"

"Er—practically. Yes, a delusion."

"Suicide!" declared Carrington with an air of profound conviction. "Yes, Mr. Rattar, that is evidently the solution. The unfortunate man had clearly not been himself, probably for some little time previously. Well, I'll make a few more inquiries, but I fancy my work is at an end. Good morning."

He rose and was half way across the room, when he stopped and asked, as if the idea had suddenly occurred to him:

"By the way, I hear that Miss Farmond was in to see you."

Again Simon seemed to start a little.

"Had she any news?" asked the other.

Simon shook his head, and Carrington nodded and went out.

"I'm dashed!" he muttered.

All the while he shook his head and slashed with his walking stick through the air. There was no doubt that Mr. Carrington was thoroughly puzzled.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Carrington's soliloquy was interrupted by the appearance of some one on the pavement ahead of him. He pulled himself together, took out his watch, and saw that it was still only twenty minutes past twelve. After thinking for a moment, he murmured:

"I might as well try 'em!"

And thereupon he set out at a brisk walk, and a few minutes later was closeted with Superintendent Sutherland in the police station.

After explaining his business and his preference for not disclosing it to the public, he went briefly over the main facts of the case.

"I see you've got them all, sir," said the superintendent, when he had finished. "There really seems nothing to add and no new light to be seen."

"I'm afraid so," agreed Carrington.

In fact, he seemed so entirely resigned to this conclusion that he allowed, and even encouraged, the conversation to turn to other matters. The activity and enterprise of the procurator fiscal seemed to have particularly impressed him, and this led to a long talk on the subject of Mr. Simon Rattar. The superintendent was also a great admirer of the fiscal and assured Mr. Carrington that not only was Mr. Simon himself the most capable and upright of men, but that the firm of Rattar had always conducted its business in a manner above reproach.

"But hadn't he some trouble at one time with his brother?" his visitor inquired.

The superintendent admitted that this was so, and also that Sir Reginald Cromarty had suffered thereby, but he was quite positive that this trouble was entirely a thing of the past.

"The fact is, superintendent, that I have a theory Sir Reginald was worrying about something before his death, and as all his business affairs are conducted by Mr. Rattar, I was wondering whether he had any difficulties in that direction. Now about this bad brother of Mr. Rattar's—there couldn't be trouble still outstanding, you think?"

"Mr. George Rattar was out of the firm, sir, years ago," the superintendent assured him. "No, it couldna be that."

"And Mr. George Rattar certainly died a short time ago, did he?"

"I can show you the paper with his death in it. I kept it as a kind of record of the end of him."

He fetched the paper, and Carrington, after looking at it for a few minutes, remarked:

"I see here an advertisement stating that Mr. Rattar lost a ring."

"Yes," said the superintendent, "that was a funny thing because it's not often a gentleman loses a ring off his hand. I've half wondered since whether it was connected with a story of Mr. Rattar's maid that his house had been broken into."

"When was that?"

"Curiously enough it was the very night Sir Reginald was murdered."

"The very night of the murder? Why has this never come out before?"

"But what connection could there possibly be, sir? Mr. Rattar thought nothing of it himself and just mentioned it so that I would know it was a mere story, in case his servants started talking about it."

"But you yourself seemed just now to think that it might not be a mere story."

"Oh, that was just a kind o' idea," said the superintendent easily. "It only came in my mind when the ring was never recovered."

"What were the exact facts?"

"Oh," said the superintendent vaguely, "there was something about a window looking as if it had been entered, but really, sir, Mr. Rattar paid so little attention to it himself, and we were that taken up by the Keldale case that I made no special note of it."

"Did the servants ever speak of it?"

"Everybody was that taken up about the murder that I doubt if they've minded on it any further."

"Are the servants intelligent girls?"

"Oh, quite average intelligent. In fact, the housemaid is a particularly decent sort of a girl."

At this point, Mr. Carrington's interest in the subject seemed to wane, and after a few pleasant generalities, he left.

About three o'clock that afternoon came a ring at the front doorbell of Mr. Simon Rattar's commodious villa. Mary MacLean declared afterward that she had a presentiment when she

heard it, but then the poor girl had been rather troubled with presentiments lately. When she opened the front door she saw a particularly polite and agreeable-looking gentleman.

"Is Mr. Simon Rattar at home?" he inquired in a courteous voice and with a soothing smile that won her heart at once. On hearing that Mr. Rattar always spent the afternoons at his office and would not return before five o'clock, his disappointment was so manifest that she felt really sorry for him.

He hesitated and was about to go away when a happy idea struck him.

"Might I come in and write a line to be left for him?" he asked.

Mary led him into the library and somehow or other by the time she had got him ink and paper and pen she found herself talking to this distinguished-looking stranger in the most friendly way. It was not that he was forward or gallant. Far from it! It was simply that he was so nice and so remarkably sympathetic.

This sympathetic visitor made several appreciative remarks about the house and garden, and then, just as he had dipped his pen into the ink, he remarked:

"Rather a tempting house for burglars, I should think, if such people existed in these peaceable parts."

"Oh, but they do, sir," she assured him. "We had one in this very house!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The sympathetic stranger almost laid down his pen, he was so interested.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Really a burglary in this house? I say, how interesting! When did it happen?"

"Well, sir," said Mary in an impressive voice, "it's a most extraordinary thing, but it was actually the very night of Sir Reginald's murder!"

"Was it the same man, do you think?"

"Indeed, I've sometimes wondered!"

"Tell me how it happened!"

"Well, sir," said Mary, "it was on the very morning that we heard about Sir Reginald, only before we'd heard, and I was pulling up the blinds in the wee sitting room when I says to myself, there's been some one in at this window!"

"The wee sitting room," repeated her visitor. "Which is that?"

He seemed so genuinely interested that before she realized what liberties she was taking in the master's house, she had led him into a small room at the end of a passage leading out of the hall. Its window looked on to the side of the garden and not toward the drive, and a grass lawn beneath it, while the room itself was obviously the most isolated, and, from a burglar's point of view, the most promising on the ground floor.

"This is the room, sir," said Mary. "You still can see the marks on the sash."

"Yes," said the visitor thoughtfully, "they seem to have been made by a tackety boot."

"And besides that, there was a wee bit mud on the floor and a tackety mark in that!"

"Was the window shut or open?"

"Shut, sir; and the most extraordinary thing was that it was snibbed, too! That's what made the master say it couldna have been a burglar at all, or how did he snib the window after he went out again?"

"Then Mr. Rattar didn't believe it was a burglar?"

"N-no, sir," said Mary.

"Was anything stolen?"

"No, sir; that was another funny thing."

"And what did Mr. Rattar do with the piece of mud?"

"Just threw it out of the window."

The sympathetic stranger crossed to the window and looked out.

"Grass underneath, I see. No foot-prints outside, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"Did the police come down and make inquiries?"

"Well, sir, the master said he would inform the police, but then came the news of the murder, and no one had any thoughts for anything else."

The sympathetic visitor stood by the window very thoughtfully for a few moments, and then turned and rewarded her with a charming smile.

"Thank you awfully for showing me all this," said he. "By the way, what's your name?" She told him and he added with a still nicer smile, "Thank you, Mary!"

They returned to the library and he sat down before the table again, but just as he was going to pick up the pen, a thought seemed to strike him.

"By the way," he said, "I remember hearing something about the loss of a ring. The burglar didn't take that, did he?"

"Oh, no, sir, I remember the advertisement was in the paper before the night of the burglary."

"Brilliant police you've got!" he murmured, and took up the pen again.

"There was another burglar here and he might have taken it!" said Mary.

"Another burglar!"

"Well, sir, this one didn't actually steal, but——"

She thought of the master if he chanced to learn how she had been gossiping, and her sentence was cut short.

"Yes, Mary? You were saying?" cooed the persuasive visitor, and Mary succumbed again and told him of that night when a shadow moved into the trees, and footprints were left in the gravel outside the library window, and the master looked so strangely in the morning. Her visitor was so interested that once she began it was really impossible to stop.

"How very strange!" he murmured.

"But about the master's ring, sir," she began.

"You say he looked as though he were being *watched*?" he interrupted.

"Yes, sir, but the funny thing about losing the ring was that he never could get it off his finger before! I've seen him trying to, but, oh, it wouldn't nearly come off!"

"Another mystery!" he murmured.

"He lost a ring which wouldn't come off his finger? By Jove! That's very rum. Are there any more mysteries, Mary, connected with this house?"

"Oh, yes, sir, there was one that gave me even a worse turn!"

By this time her visitor seemed to have given up all immediate thoughts of writing his note to Mr. Rattar.

"Let's hear it, Mary," he said.

And then she told him the story of that dreadful night when the unknown visitor came for the box of old papers. He gazed at her, listening very attentively, and then in a soothing voice asked her several questions, more particularly as to when all these mysterious events occurred.

"And are these all your troubles now, Mary?" he inquired.

He asked so sympathetically that at last she even ventured to tell him her latest trouble. Till he had fairly charmed it out of her, she had shrunk from telling him anything that seemed to reflect directly on her master or to be giving away any of his concerns. But now she confessed that Mr. Rattar's conduct, Mr. Rattar's looks, and even Mr. Rattar's very infrequent words had been troubling her strangely.

"You don't mean that just now and then he takes a wee drop too much?"

"Oh, no, sir," said she, "the master never did take more than what a gentleman should, and he's not a smoking gentleman either. Oh, it's nothing like that!"

She looked over her shoulder fearfully as though the walls might repeat her words to the master, as she told him of the curious and disturbing

thing. Mr. Rattar had been till lately a gentleman of the most exact habits, and then all of a sudden he had taken to walking in his garden in a way he never did before. She had noticed him first about the time of the burglary and the removal of the papers, walking there in the mornings. That, perhaps, was not so very disturbing, but since then he had changed this for a habit of slipping out of the house every night!

"And walking in the garden!"

"Sometimes I've heard his footsteps on the gravel, sir! Even when it has been raining I've heard them. Perhaps sometimes he goes outside the garden, but I've never heard of any one meeting him on the road or streets. It's in the garden I've heard the master's steps, sir, and if you had been with him as long as I've been, and knew how regular his habits was, you'd know how I'm feeling, sir!"

"I do know, Mary; I quite understand," Mr. Carrington assured her in his soothing voice.

"What time does he generally go out?" he asked.

"At nine o'clock every night, sir!"

Mr. Carrington looked thoughtfully out of the window into the garden.

"Look here, Mary," he said very confidentially. "I am a friend of Mr. Rattar's and I am sure you would like me to try and throw a little light on this. Perhaps something is troubling him and I could help you to clear it up."

"Oh, sir," she cried, "you are very kind! I wish you could!"

"Perhaps the best thing, then," he suggested, "would be for me not to leave a note for him after all, and for you not even to mention that I have called. As he knows me pretty well he would be almost sure to ask you whether I had come in, and if I had left any message, and so on, and then he might perhaps find out that we had been talking, and that wouldn't, perhaps, be pleasant for you, would it?"

"Oh, my! No, indeed it wouldn't!" she agreed. "I'm that feared of the master, sir, I'd never have him know I had been talking about him, or about anything that has happened here."

So, having come to this judicious decision, Mr. Carrington wished Mary the kindest of farewells and walked down the drive again. There could be no question he had plenty to think about now, though to judge from his expression, it seemed doubtful whether his thoughts were very clear.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The laird of Stanesland strode into the King's Arms and demanded:

"Mr. Carrington? What, having a cup of tea in his room? What's his number? Twenty-seven! I'll walk right up, thanks."

He walked right up and strode jauntily in. There was no beating about the bush with Mr. Cromarty either in deed or word.

"Well, Mr. Carrington," said he, "don't trouble to look surprised. I guess you've seen right through me for some time back."

"Meaning?" asked Carrington with his engaging smile.

"Meaning that I'm the unknown, unsuspected, and mysterious person who's putting up the purse. Don't pretend you haven't tumbled to that!"

"Yes," admitted Carrington, "I have tumbled."

"I knew my sister had given the whole blamed show away! I take it you put your magnifying glass back in your pocket after your trip out to Stanesland?"

"More or less," admitted Carrington.

"Well," said Ned, "that being so, I may as well tell you what my idea was. It mayn't have been very bright; still, there was a kind of method in my madness. You see, I wanted you to have an absolutely clear field and suspect me just as much as anybody else."



"But," she exclaimed, "Mr. Rattar said you suspected Malcolm and me, and were determined to prove our guilt!"

"Simon Rattar said that!"

"In short," smiled Carrington, "you wanted to start with the other horses and not just drop the flag."

"That's so," agreed Ned. "But when my sister let out about that twelve hundred pounds and I saw that you must have spotted me, there didn't seem much point in keeping up the bluff.

And since then, Mr. Carrington, something has happened that you ought to know, and I decided to come and see you and talk to you straight."

"What has happened?"

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said Ned, "and may strike you as hardly credible, but here's the plain truth put

shortly. Yesterday afternoon Miss Farmond ran away." Seeing Carrington's nod, he exclaimed: "What! You know then?"

"I learned from Bisset this morning."

"Ah, I see. Did you know I'd happened to see her start and gone after her and brought her back?"

"No," said Carrington, "that's quite news to me."

"Well, I did, and I learned the whole story from her. You can't guess who advised her to bolt?"

"I think I can," said Carrington quietly.

"Either you're on the wrong track, or you've cut some ice, Mr. Carrington. It was Simon Rattar!"

"I thought so."

"How the devil did you guess?"

"Tell me Miss Farmond's story first, and I'll tell you how I guessed."

"Well, she spotted you were a detective."

"Confound these women!" said Carrington, smiling. "They're so infernally independent of reason, they always spot things they shouldn't!"

"Then she discovered she was suspected, and so she got in a stew, poor girl, and went to see Rattar. Do you know what he told her? That I was employing you and meant to convict Sir Malcolm and her and hang them with my own hands!"

"The old devil!" cried Carrington. "Well, no wonder she bolted, Mr. Cromarty!"

"But even that was done by Simon's advice. He actually gave her an address in London to go to."

"Pretty thorough!" murmured Carrington.

"Now what do you make of that? What ought one to do? And, by the way, how did you guess Simon was at the bottom of it?"

"We are in pretty deep waters, Mr. Cromarty," Carrington said slowly.

"As to what I make of it—nothing as yet. As to what we are to do—also nothing. But as to how I guessed, well I can tell you this much. I had to get information from some one, and so I called on Mr. Rattar and told him who I was—in strict confidence, by the way, so that he had no business to tell Miss Farmond or anybody else. I had started off, I may say, with a wrong guess. I thought Rattar himself was probably either my employer or acting for my employer, and when I suggested this, he told me I was right."

"What!" shouted Ned. "The g-unting old devil told you that? Why did he tell you that lie?"

"Fortune played my cards for me. Quite innocently and unintentionally I tempted him. I said if I could be sure he was my employer I'd keep him in touch with everything I was doing. I had also let him know that my employer had made it an absolute condition that his name was not to appear. He evidently wanted badly to know what I was doing, and thought he was sure not to be given away."

"Then have you kept him in touch with everything you have done?"

"I tell you, Mr. Cromarty, my cards were being played for me. Five minutes later I asked him who benefited by the will and I learned that you had scored the precise sum of twelve hundred pounds."

"I hadn't thought of that when I made my limit twelve hundred pounds!" exclaimed Ned. "Lord, you must have bowled me out at once! Of course, you spotted the coincidence straight off?"

"But Rattar didn't! I pushed it under his nose and he didn't see it! Inside of one second I'd asked myself whether it was possible for an astute man like that not to notice such a coincidence, supposing he had really guaranteed me exactly that sum—an extraordinarily large and curious sum, too."

"I like these simple riddles," said Ned with a twinkle in his single eye. "I guess your answer to yourself was 'No!'"

"Yes, and that's what I call having my cards played for me. I knew then that the man was lying, so I threw him off the scent, changed the subject, and did *not* keep Mr. Simon Rattar in touch with any single thing I did after that."

"Good for you!" said Ned.

"Good so far, but the next riddle wasn't of the simple kind—or else I'm even a bigger ass than I endeavor to look! What was the man's game?"

"Have you spotted it yet?"

"Mr. Simon Rattar's game is the toughest proposition I've ever struck, in the way of puzzles. While I'm at it I'll just tell you one or two other small features of that first interview. I happened to have met Miss Farmond that morning and my interview had knocked the bottom out of the story that she was concerned in the crime. I had satisfied myself also that she was not engaged to Sir Malcolm."

"How did you discover that?" exclaimed Ned.

"Her manner when I mentioned him. But I found that old Rattar was wrong on both these points and apparently determined to remain wrong. Of course, it might have been a mere error of judgment, but at the same time he had no evidence whatever against her, and it seemed to suggest a curious bias. And finally, I didn't like the look of the man."

"And then you came out to see me?"

"I went out to Keldale House first and then out to you. I next interviewed Sir Malcolm."

"Interviewed Malcolm Cromarty!" exclaimed Ned. "Where?"

"He came up to see me," explained Carrington easily, "and the gentleman had scarcely spoken six sentences before I shared your opinion of him, Mr. Cromarty—a squirt, but not homi-

cidal. He gave me, however, one very interesting piece of information. Rattar had advised him to keep away from these parts, and for choice, to go abroad. I need hardly ask whether you consider that sound advice to give a suspected man."

"Seems to me nearly as rotten advice as he gave Miss Farmond."

"Exactly. So when I heard that Miss Farmond had flown, and discovered she had paid a visit to Mr. Rattar the previous day, I guessed who had given her the advice."

"It seems to me," said Ned at last, "that Simon Rattar is mixed up in this business, sure! He has something to hide, and he's trying to put people off the scent, I'll bet my bottom dollar!"

"What is he hiding?" inquired Carrington.

"What do you think?"

"I wish to Heaven I knew what to think!" Carrington murmured; and then he resumed a brisker air and continued, "I am ready to suspect Simon Rattar of any crime in the calendar, leaving out petty larceny and bigamy. But he's the last man to do either good or evil unless he saw a dividend at the end, and where does he score by taking any part or parcel in conniving at or abetting or concealing evidence or anything else, so far as this particular crime is concerned?"

"He has lost his best client, with whom he was on excellent terms, and whose family he had served all his life; and he has now got, instead, an unsatisfactory young ass whom he suspects, or says he suspects, of murder, and who so loathes Rattar that, as far as I can judge, he will probably take his business away from him. To suspect Rattar of actually conniving at, or taking any part in the actual crime itself is, on the face of it, to convict either Rattar or oneself of lunacy!"

"I knew Sir Reginald pretty well," said Ned, "but, of course, I didn't know

much about his business affairs. He hadn't been having any trouble with Rattar, had he?"

Carrington threw him a quick, approving glance.

"We are thinking on the same lines," said he, "and I have unearthed one very odd little misunderstanding, but it seems to have been nothing more than that, and, apart from it, all accounts agree that there was no trouble of any kind or description.

"There must be *some* motive for everything one does. I can see no point whatever in Rattar's taking the smallest share even in diverting the course of justice by a hair's breadth. He and you and I have, to all appearances, identical interests in the matter."

"You are wiser than I am," said Ned simply, but with a grim look in his eye, "but all I can say is I am going out with my gun to look for Simon Rattar."

"I'm afraid you'll have to catch him at something a little better known to the charge sheets than giving bad advice to a lady client, before it's safe to fire!" said Carrington, smiling.

"But, look here, Carrington, have you collected no other facts whatever about this case?"

Carrington shot him a curious glance.

"Oh, well," Ned went on, "if you don't want to say anything yet, don't say it. Play your hand as you think best."

"Mr. Cromarty," replied Carrington, "I assure you I don't want to make facts into mysteries, but when they *are* mysteries—well, I like to think 'em over a bit before I trust myself to talk. In the course of this very afternoon I've collected an assortment either of facts or fiction that seem to have broken loose from a traveling nightmare."

"Mind telling where you got 'em?" asked Ned.

"Chiefly from Rattar's housemaid.

How much to believe of what she told me I honestly don't know. And the more one can believe, the worse the puzzle gets! However, there is *one* statement which I hope to be able to check. It may throw some light on the lady's veracity generally."

"I see," said Ned, rising. "And I guess you find one better company than two at this particular moment. I won't shoot Simon Rattar till I hear from you, though by Gad, I'm tempted to kick him just to be going on with! But look here, Carrington, if my services will ever do you the least bit of good—in fact, so long as I'm not actually in the way—just send me a wire and I'll come straight. You won't refuse me that?"

"Not likely!" he said. "That's not the sort of offer I refuse. I won't hesitate to wire if there's anything happening; but don't count on it. I can't see any business doing just yet."

"You don't see any business doing just yet? But you feel you're on his track, sure! Now, don't you?"

"Whose track?" Carrington asked, half quizzically, half abstractedly.

"Was it Simon himself?" Ned rapped out.

"If we were all living in a lunatic asylum, probably yes! If we were living in the palace of reason, certainly not! The thing's ridiculous! What we are actually living in, however, is——"

"What?" Ned broke in.

"A blank fog!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was a few minutes after half past eight when Miss Peterkin chanced to meet her friend Mr. Carrington in the entrance hall of the King's Arms. He was evidently going out, and she noticed he was rather differently habited from usual, wearing now a long, light topcoat of a very dark-gray hue, and a dark-colored felt hat.

"Are you going to desert us to-night, Mr. Carrington?" asked the mistress.

"I have a letter or two to post," said he, "and they are an excuse for a stroll. I want a breath of fresh air."

Mr. Carrington's leisurely movements undoubtedly played no small part in the unsuspecting confidence which he inspired.

It was a very dark, moonless night, and the air was almost quite still. Judging from his contented expression the night seemed to please Mr. Carrington. He passed the post office, but omitted to drop any letters into the box. The breath of fresh air seemed, in fact, to be his sole preoccupation. Moving with a slightly quickened stride, he turned out of one street into another, and in a short time he was nearing the lights of the station. He gave these a wide berth, however, and presently was strolling up a very secluded road, with a few villas and gardens upon the one side, and blank space on the other. There, for a moment, he stopped and transferred something from the pocket of his inner coat into the pocket of his topcoat. It was a small compact article, and a ray of light from a lamp-post behind him gleamed for an instant upon a circular metal orifice at one end of it.

Before he moved on, he searched the darkness intently, before him and behind, but saw no sign of any other passenger. And then he turned the rim of his dark felt hat down over his face, stepped out briskly for some fifty yards farther, and turned sharply through an open gate. In his dark topcoat and with his hat turned over his face he was as nearly invisible as a man could be, but even this did not seem to satisfy him, for in a moment he gently parted the branches of the trees and pushed through the belt of planting to the lawn beyond.

The villa of Mr. Simon Rattar was now half seen beyond the curving end

of the belt that bounded the drive. It was dim against the night sky, and the garden was dimmer still. Carrington followed the outside of the trees, and plunging into them when they curved round at the top of the drive, he reached the other side. There his expedition in search of fresh air seemed to have found its goal, for he leaned his back against a tree trunk, folded his arms, and waited.

He was looking obliquely across a sweep of gravel, with the whole front of the house full in view. A ray came from the fanlight over the front door and a faint radiance escaped through the slats of the library blinds.

From a church tower in the town came the stroke of a clock. Carrington counted nine. His eyes were riveted on the front door now. Barely two more minutes passed before it opened quietly. A figure appeared for an instant in the light of the hall. Then, as quietly, the door closed again. There was a lull at the moment, but Carrington could hear not a sound. The figure must be standing very still on the doorstep, listening—evidently listening. And then the thickset form of Simon Rattar appeared dimly on the gravel, crossing to the lawn beyond. The pebbles crunched a little, but not very much. He seemed to be walking warily, and when he reached the farther side, he stood still again. Carrington could see his head moving, as though he were looking all round him through the night.

But now the figure was moving again, coming this time straight for the head of the belt of trees. Carrington had drawn on a pair of dark gloves, and he raised his arm to cover the lower part of his face. Looking over it through the branches, he faced the silent owner of the garden. There were hardly three paces between them, the one on the lawn, the other in the heart of the plantation.

When Simon was exactly opposite, he stopped dead. Carrington's other hand slipped noiselessly into the pocket where he had dropped that little article, but otherwise he never moved a muscle. He breathed very gently. The man on the turf seemed to be doing something with his hands, but what, it was impossible to say. The hands would move into his pocket and then out again, till quite three or four minutes had passed, and then came a sudden flash of light. Carrington's right hand moved halfway out of his pocket and then was stayed, for by the light of the match he saw a very singular sight.

Simon Rattar was not looking at him. His eyes were focused just before his nose where the bowl of a pipe was beginning to glow. Carrington could hear the lips gently sucking, and then the aroma of tobacco came in a strong wave through the trees. Finally the match went out, and the glowing pipe began to move slowly along the turf, keeping close to the shelter of the trees.

For a space Carrington stood petrified with wonder, and then, very carefully and quite silently, he worked his way through the trees out on to the turf, and at once fell on his hands and knees. Had any one been there to see, he would have beheld for the next five minutes a strange procession of two people slowly moving along the edge of the plantation—a thickset man in front, smoking a pipe, and something like a great gorilla stalking him from behind. This procession skirted the plantation nearly down to the gate; then it turned at right angles, following the line of trees that bordered the wall between the garden and the road; and then again at right angles when it had reached the farther corner of Mr. Rattar's estate. Simon was now in a secluded path with shrubs on either hand, and instead of continuing his tour, he turned at the

end of this path and paced slowly back again. And seeing this, the ape behind him squatted in the shadow of a laurel and waited.

The wind made the pipe smoke quickly, and presently a shower of sparks showed that it was being emptied. In a minute or two another match flashed and a second pipe glowed faintly.

Backward and forward paced the lawyer, and backward and forward again, but for the space of nearly an hour from his first coming out, that was everything that happened. The procession kept on, Simon in front, the apelike form behind; and after a while, they were heading for the house. The lawyer's steps crunched lightly on the gravel again, the front door opened and closed, and Carrington was alone in the garden.

Still crawling, he reached the shelter of the belt of trees and then rose and made swiftly for the gate, and out into the road. As he passed under a lamp, his face wore a totally new expression, compounded of wonder, excitement, and urgent thought. Before he entered the King's Arms, he took off his hat and turned up the brim again, and his manner, when he tapped at the door of the manageress' room, was perfectly sedate. He let it appear, however, that he had some slight matter on his mind.

"What is the name of Mr. Rattar's head clerk?" he inquired. "An oldish, prim-looking man, with side whiskers."

"Oh, that will be Mr. Ison," said the manageress.

"I have just remembered a bit of business I ought to have seen about to-night," he continued. "I can't very well call on Mr. Rattar himself at this hour, but I was thinking of looking up Mr. Ison if I could discover his whereabouts."

"The boots will show you the way to his house," said she, and rang the bell.

While waiting, Mr. Carrington asked another casual question or two and learned that Mr. Ison had been in the office since he was a boy. No man knew the house of Rattar throughout its two generations better than Mr. Ison, said Miss Peterkin.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Had there been, next morning, any curious eyes to watch the conduct of the gentleman who had come to rent a sporting estate, they would probably have surmised that he had found something to please his fancy strangely, and yet that some perplexity still persisted. On a lonely stretch of shore, hard by the little town, he paced for nearly an hour, his face a record of the debate within, and his cane gesticulating.

Of a sudden he stopped dead and his lips moved in a murmured ejaculation, and then, after standing stock-still for some minutes, he murmured again:

"Ten to one on it!"

His cane had been stationary during this pause. Now he raised it once more, but this time with careful attention. It was a light bamboo with a silver head. He looked at it thoughtfully, bent it this way and that, and then drove it into the sand and pressed it down. Though to the ordinary eye, a very chaste and appropriate walking stick for such a gentleman as Mr. Carrington, the result of these tests seemed to dissatisfy him. He shook his head, and then with an air of resolution set out for the town.

A little later he entered a shop where a number of walking sticks were on view and informed the proprietor that he desired to purchase something more suitable for the country than the cane he carried. In fact, his taste seemed now to run to the very opposite extreme, for the points on which he insisted were length, stiffness, and a long and, if possible, somewhat pointed ferule. At last he found one to his

mind, left his own cane to be sent down to the hotel, and walked out with his new purchase.

His next call was at Mr. Simon Rattar's villa. This morning he approached it without any of the curious shyness he had exhibited on the occasion of his recent visit. Mary answered the bell, and her pleasure at seeing so soon again the sympathetic gentleman with the eyeglass was a tribute to his tact.

"Good morning, Mary," said he with an air that combined the courtesy of a gentleman with the freedom of an old friend. "Mr. Rattar is at his office, I presume."

She said that he was.

"I thought he would be," he confessed confidentially, "and I have come to see whether I couldn't do something to help you get at the bottom of these troublesome goings on. Anything fresh happened?"

"The master was out in the garden again last night, sir!"

"Was he really?" cried Mr. Carrington. "By Jove, how curious! We really must look into that. In fact, I've got an idea I want you to help me with. By the way, it sounds an odd question to ask about Mr. Rattar, but have you ever seen any sign of a pipe or tobacco in the house?"

"Oh, never, indeed!" said she. "The master has never been a smoking gentleman. Quite against smoking he's always been, sir."

"Ever since you have known him?"

"Oh, and before that, sir."

"Ah!" observed Mr. Carrington in a manner that suggested nothing whatever. "Well, Mary, I want this morning to have a look round the garden."

"Because the master walks there at nights?" Mary asked wonderingly.

He nodded confidentially.

"But—but if he was to know you'd been interfering, sir—I mean what he'd think was interfering, sir——"

"He shan't know," he assured her.

"At least, not if you'll do what I tell you. I want you to go now and have a nice quiet talk with cook for half an hour—half an hour by the kitchen clock, Mary. If you don't look out of the window, you won't know that I'm in the garden, and then nobody can blame you, whatever happens. We haven't mentioned the word 'garden' between us, so you are out of it! Remember that."

"I'll remember, sir," said she. "And cook is to be kept talking in the kitchen?"

"You've tumbled to it exactly, Mary. If neither of you see me, neither of you know anything at all."

Mary went faithfully to the kitchen for her talk with cook. It was quite a pleasant gossip at first, but half an hour is a long time to keep talking, when one has been asked not to stop sooner.

Passing out of the kitchen regions, Mary glanced toward a distant window, hesitated, and then came to another decision. Mr. Carrington must surely have left the garden now, so there was no harm in peeping out.

It was only a two minutes' peep, for Mr. Carrington had not left the garden, and at the end of that space of time something very disturbing happened. But it was long enough to make her marvel greatly at her sympathetic friend's method of solving the riddle of the master's conduct. When she first saw him, he seemed to be smoothing the earth in one of the flower beds with his foot. Then he moved on a few paces, stopped, and drove his walking stick hard into the bed. She saw him lean on it to get it farther in and apparently twist it about a little. And then he withdrew it again and was in the act of smoothing the place when she saw him glance sharply toward the gate, and the next instant leap behind a bush. Simultaneously the hum of a motor car fell on her ear, and Mary was

out of the room and speeding upstairs. She heard the car draw up before the house and listened for the front doorbell, but the door opened without a ring and she marveled and trembled afresh. That the master should return in a car at this hour of the morning seemed surely to be connected with the sin she had connived at. It swelled into a crime as she held her breath and listened. She wished devoutly she had never set eyes on Mr. Carrington.

But there came no call for her, or no ringing of any bell, merely sounds of movement in the hall below, heard through the thrumming of the waiting car. And then the front door opened and shut again and she ventured to the window. It was open and she could hear her master speak to the chauffeur as he got in. He was now wearing, she noticed, a heavy overcoat. A moment more and he was off again, down the drive, and out through the gates. When she remembered to look again for her sympathetic friend, he was quietly driving his walking stick once more into a flower bed.

About ten minutes afterward the front doorbell rang and there stood Mr. Carrington again. His eye seemed strangely bright, she thought, but his manner was calm and soothing as ever.

"I noticed Mr. Rattar return," he said, "and I thought I would like to make sure that it was all right, before I left. I trust, Mary, that you have got into no trouble on my account."

"The master was only just in and out again," she assured him.

"He came to get his overcoat, I noticed," he remarked.

"Yes, sir, that was all."

"Well, I'm very glad it was all right," he smiled and began to turn away. "By the way," he asked, turning back, "did he tell you where he is going to now?"

"He didn't see me, sir."

"You didn't happen to overhear him

giving any directions to the chauffeur, did you? I noticed you at an open window."

For the first time Mary's sympathetic friend began to make her feel a trifle uncomfortable. His eyes seemed to be everywhere.

"I thought I heard him say 'Keldale House,'" she confessed.

"Really!" he exclaimed and seemed to muse for a moment.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The short November afternoon was fading into a gusty evening, as Ned Cromarty drew near his fortalice. He carried a gun as usual, and walked with seven-league strides. It was already dusk and the tortured boughs had begun their night of sighs and tossings, but the old house stood up still clear against a broken sky. He had almost reached the front door when he heard the sound of wheels behind him. Pausing there, he spied a pony and a governess car, with two people distinct enough to bring a sudden light into his eye. The pony trotted briskly toward the door, and he took a stride to meet them.

"Miss Farmond!" he said.

A low voice answered, and though he could not catch the words, the tone was enough for him. And then another voice said:

"Aye, sir, I've brought her over."

"Bisset!" said he, "it's you, is it? Well, what's happened?"

He was helping her out of the trap and not hesitating to hold her hand a little longer than he had ever held it before, now that he could see her face quite plainly and read her eyes.

"I've dared to come after all!" she said with a little smile, which seemed to hint that she knew the risk was over.

"I advised her very strongly, sir, to come over with me to Stanesland," explained her escort. "The young lady has had a trying experience at Keldale,

and besides the fair impossibility of her stopping on under the unfortunate circumstances, I was of the opinion that the sea air would be a fine change and the architectural features remarkably interesting. In fact, sir, I practically insisted that Miss Farmond come."

"Good man!" said Ned. "Come in and tell me the unfortunate circumstances." He bent over Cicely and in a lowered voice added: "Personally I call 'em fortunate—so long as they haven't been too beastly for you!"

"It's all right now!" she murmured, and as they went up the steps he found, somehow or other, her hand for an instant in his again.

"If you'll stand by your pony for a moment, Bisset, I'll send out some one to take her," he said.

But Mr. Bisset was not so easily shaken off.

"She'll stand fine for a wee while," he assured his host. "You'll be the better of hearing all about it from me."

They went into the smoking room and the escort began forthwith.

"The fact is, Mr. Cromarty, that yon man Simon Rattar is a fair discredit. Miss Farmond has been telling me the hail story of her running away, and your ain vera seasonable appearance and judicious conduct, sir; which I am bound to say, Mr. Cromarty, is neither more nor less than I'd have expected of a gentleman of your intelligence. Weel, to continue, Miss Farmond acted on your advice—which would have been my own, sir, under the circumstances—and tellt her ladyship the plain facts. Weel then——"

"And what did Lady Cromarty say to you?" demanded Ned.

"Hardly a word. She simply looked at me and said she would send for Mr. Rattar."

Not a whit rebuffed, Mr. Bisset straightway resumed his narrative.

"A perfectly proper principle if the man was capable of telling the truth.

I'm no blaming her ladyship at that point, but where she departit from the proper principles of evidence——"

"When did Rattar come?"

"This morning," said Cicely. "And——can you believe it——he absolutely denied that he had ever advised me to go away!"

"I can believe it," said Ned grimly. "And I suppose Lady Cromarty believed him?"

"Gad, but you're right, sir!" cried Bisset. "Your deductions are perfectly correct. Yon man had the impudence to give the hail thing a flat denial! And then, naturally, Miss Farmond was for off, but at first her ladyship was no for letting her go. Indeed, she went the length of sending for me and telling me the young lady was not to be permitted to shift her luggage out of the house or use any conveyance."

"But Bisset was splendid!" cried Cicely. "Do you know what the foolish man did? He gave up his situation and took me away!"

Bisset, the man, permitted a gleam of pleasure to illuminate his blunt features; but Bisset, the philosopher, protested with some dignity.

"It was a mere matter of principle, sir. Detention of luggage like yon is no legal. I tellt her ladyship flatly that she'd find herself afore the shirra', and that I was no going to abet any such proceedings. I further informed her, sir, of my candid opinion of Simon Rattar, and I said plainly that he was probably meaning to marry her and get the estate under his thumb, and these were the kind o' tricks rascally lawyers took in foolish women wi'."

"You told Lady Cromarty that!" exclaimed Ned. "What did she say?"

"We had a few disagreeable passages, as it were, sir," said the philosopher calmly, "and then I borrowed yon trap; and having advised Miss Farmond to come to Stanesland, and she being amenable, I just brought her."

"Oh, it was on your advice then?"

"Yes, sir."

Cicely and her host exchanged one fleeting glance and then looked extremely unconscious.

"She's derved wise!" said he to himself.

He held out his hand to the gratified counselor.

"Well done, Bisset, you've touched your top form to-day; and I may tell you I've been wanting some one like you badly for a long while, if you are willing to stay on with me. Put that in your pipe, Bisset, and smoke over it! And now, you know your way——go and get yourself some tea and a drink of the wildest poison you fancy!"

Hardly was the door closed behind him than the laird put his fate to the test as promptly and directly as he did most other things.

"I want you to stop on, too, Cicely——forever. Will you?"

Her eyes, shyly questioning for a moment and then shyly tender, answered his question before her lips had moved, and it would have been hard to convince them that the minutes which followed ever had a parallel within human experience.

"Do you know, Cicely," he confessed later, "I've always had a funky feeling that if I ever proposed, my glass eye would drop out!"

The next event was the somewhat sudden entry of Lilian Cromarty, and that lady's self-control was never more severely tested or more brilliantly vindicated. One startled glance, and then she was saying, briskly, and with the old bright smile:

"A telegram for you, Ned!"

"Thanks," said he. "By the way, here's the future Mrs. Ned—that's to say, if she doesn't funk it before the wedding."

Lilian's welcome, Lilian's embrace, and Lilian's congratulations were alike perfect. Cicely wondered how people

could ever have said the critical things of her which some of her acquaintances were unkind enough to say at times. As to Bisset's dictum regarding the lady in the castle, that was manifestly absurd on the face of it. Miss Cromarty was clearly overjoyed.

"And now, Neddy dear!" cried the bright lady, "tell me how it all came about!"

Ned looked up from his telegram with a glint in his eye that was hardly a lover's glance.

"Cicely will tell you all about it," said he. "I'm afraid I've got to be off pretty well as quick as I can."

He handed them the wire and they read:

Meet me eight to-night King's Arms
urgently. CARRINGTON.

"From Mr. Carrington!" exclaimed his sister.

"Cicely will explain him, too," Ned said, smiling. "By Gad, I wonder if this is going to be the finishing bit of luck!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Cromarty and Carrington slipped unostentatiously out of the hotel a few minutes after eight o'clock.

"Take any line you like," said Carrington, "but as he knows now that you brought Miss Farmond back and have heard her version, he'll naturally be feeling a little uncomfortable about the place where one generally gets kicked, when he sees you march in. He will expect you to open out on that subject, so if I were you I'd take the natural line and do what he expects."

"Including the kicking?"

"Keep him waiting for that," said Carrington, smiling. "Spin it out; that's your job to-night."

"I wish it were more than talking!"

"Well," drawled Carrington, "it may lead to something more amusing. Who knows? You haven't brought your own gun, I suppose? Take mine."

He handed him the same little article he had taken out the night before, and Ned's eye gleamed.

"What!" said he. "That kind of gun once more? This reminds me of old times!"

"It's a mere precaution," said the other. "Don't count on using it! Remember, you're going to visit the most respectable citizen of the town—perhaps on a wild-geese errand."

"I guess not," said Ned quietly.

"We daren't assume anything. I don't want to make a fool of myself, and no more do you, I take it."

"I see," said Ned with a nod. "Well, I'll keep him in his chair for you."

"That's it."

They were walking quickly through the silent town under the windy night sky. It was a dark, boisterous evening, not inviting for strollers, and they scarcely passed a soul till they were in the quiet road where the villa stood. There, from the shadows of a gateway, two figures moved out to meet them, and Cromarty recognized Superintendent Sutherland and one of his constables. The two saluted in silence and fell in behind. They each carried, he noticed, something long-shaped, wrapped up loosely in sacking.

"What have they got there?"

"Prosaic instruments," smiled Carrington. "I won't tell you more, for fear the gamble doesn't come off."

"Like the sensation before one proposes, I suppose," said Ned. "Well, going by that, the omens ought to be all right."

They turned in through Simon's gates and then the four stopped.

"We part here," whispered Carrington. "Good luck!"

"Same to you," said Ned briefly, and strode up the drive.

As he came out into the gravel sweep before the house, he looked hard into the darkness of the garden, but there was not a sign of movement.

"Mr. Rattar in?" he inquired. "Sitting in the library, I suppose? Take me right to him. Cromarty's my name."

"Mr. Cromarty to see you, sir," announced Mary, and she was startled to see the master's sudden turn in his chair and the look upon his face.

"Whether he was feared or whether he was angered, I canna rightly say," she told cook, "but anyway, he looked fair madlike!"

"Good evening," said Ned.

His voice was restrained and dry, and as he spoke he strode across the room and seated himself deliberately in the armchair on the side of the fire opposite the lawyer.

Simon had banished that first look which Mary saw, but there remained in his eyes something more than their usual cold stare. Each day since Carrington came seemed to have aged his face and changed it for the worse. A haggard, ugly, malicious face it seemed to his visitor, looking hard at it, to-night. His only greeting was a briefer grunt than usual.

"I dare say you can guess what's brought me here," said Ned.

"No. I can't," the lawyer rapped out.

"Try three guesses," suggested his visitor. "Come now, number one?"

For a moment Simon was silent, but to-night he could not hide the working of that face which usually hid his thoughts so effectually. It was plain he hesitated as to what line to take.

"You have seen Miss Farmond, I hear," he said.

"You're on the scent," said his visitor encouragingly. "Have another go."

"You believe her story."

"I do."

"It's false."

"I'm wondering," said Ned.

"Wondering what?" asked Simon.

"Whether a horsewhip or the toe of a shooting boot is the best cure for your complaint."

The lawyer shrank back.

"Do you threaten me?" he jerked out. "Be careful!"

"If I threatened you, I'd certainly do what I threatened," said Ned. "So far, I'm only wondering. Where did you learn to lie, Mr. Rattar?"

The lawyer made no answer at all. His mind seemed concentrated on guessing the other's probable actions.

"Out with it, man! I've met some derved good liars in my time, but you beat the lot! I'm anxious to know where you learned the trick."

"Why do you believe her more than me?" asked Simon.

"Because you've been found out lying before. That was a pretty stiff one about your engaging Carrington, wasn't it?"

Simon was quite unable to control his violent start, and his face turned whiter.

"I—I didn't say I did," he stammered.

"Well," said Ned, "I admit I wasn't there to hear you, but I know Carrington made you put your foot fairly in it just by way of helping him to size you up, and he got your size right enough."

"Then——" began Simon, and stopped and changed it into, "What does Carrington suspect—er—accuse me of?"

Ned stared at him for several seconds without speaking, and this procedure seemed to disconcert the lawyer more than anything he had done yet.

"What—what does Carrington mean?" he repeated.

"He means you've lied; and he believes Miss Farmond and he believes Sir Malcolm and he believes me and he puts you down as a pretty bad egg. What did you expect to be accused of?"

Simon could no more hide his relief to-night than he could hide his fears.

"Only of what you have told me—only, of course, of what you say! But I can explain."

It was at that moment that the door opened sharply and the start the lawyer gave showed the state of his nerves after Mr. Cromarty's handling. Mary MacLean stood in the doorway, her face twitching.

"What's the matter?" snapped her master.

"Please, sir, there are men in the garden!" she cried.

The lawyer leaped to his feet.

"Men in the garden!" he cried, and there was a note in his voice which startled even tough Ned Cromarty. "What are they doing?"

"I don't know, sir. It sounded almost as if they was digging."

Simon swayed for an instant and grasped the back of his chair. Then in a muffled voice he muttered:

"I'm going to see!"

He had scarcely made a step toward the door when Cromarty was on his feet, too.

"Steady!" he cried. "Get out there, and shut the door!"

The towering form and formidable voice sent Mary out with a shut door between them almost as the command was off his tongue. A couple of strides and he had got the lawyer by the shoulder and pulled him back.

"Sit down!" he commanded.

Simon turned on him with a new expression. The terror had passed away and he stood there now as the beast at bay.

"Damn you!" he muttered, and turned his back for a moment.

The next, his hand rose, and simultaneously Ned's arm shot out and got him by the wrist, while the shock of his onslaught drove the man back and down into his chair. Though Simon was tough and stoutly built, he was as a child in the hands of his adversary. A sharp twist of the wrist was followed by an exclamation of pain and the thud of something heavy on the floor. Ned stopped and picked up the globular,

glass match box that had stood on the table. For a few moments he stared at it in dead silence, balancing it in his hands. It was like a small cannon ball for concentrated weight. Then, in a curious voice he asked:

"Is this the first time you have used this?"

Simon made no reply. His face was dead white now, but dogged and grim, and his mouth stayed tight as a trap. Ned replaced the match box on the table, and planted himself before the fire.

"Nothing to say?" he asked, and Simon said nothing.

They remained like this for minute after minute; not a movement in the room, and the booming of the wind the only sound. And then came footsteps on the gravel and the ringing of a bell.

"We'll probably learn something now," said Ned, but the other still said nothing, and only a quick glance toward the door gave a hint of his thoughts.

There was no announcement this time. Superintendent Sutherland entered first, then the constable, and Carrington last. The superintendent went straight up to the lawyer, his large face preternaturally solemn. Touching him on the shoulder he said:

"I arrest you in the king's name!"

The man in the chair half started up and then fell back again.

"What for?" he asked huskily.

"For the murder of Simon Rattar."

The lawyer took it as one who had seen the sword descending, but not so Ned Cromarty.

"Of Simon Rattar!" he shouted.

"What the—then who the devil is this?"

Carrington answered. He spoke with his usual easy smile, but his triumphant eye betrayed his heart.

"The superintendent has omitted part of the usual formalities," he said. "This person should have been introduced as Mr. George Rattar."

"George!" gasped Ned. "But I thought he was dead!"

"So did I," said Carrington, "but he wasn't!"

"What proof have you of this story?" demanded the man in the chair suddenly.

"We have just dug up your brother's body from that flower bed," said Carrington quietly. "Do you recognize his ring?"

He held up a gold signet ring, and the lawyer fell back in his chair.

"But look here!" exclaimed Ned. "What about Sir Reginald's murder? He did that, too, I suppose!"

Carrington nodded.

"We hope to add that to his account in a day or two. This is enough to be going on with, but as a matter of fact, we have nearly enough evidence now to add the other charge."

"I can add one bit," said Ned, picking up the match box. "He has just tried to do me in with this little thing, and I take it, it was the third time of using."

Carrington weighed it in his hand, and then said to the prisoner:

"You put it in the end of a stocking, I suppose?"

The man looked up at him with a new expression in his eye. If it were not a trace of grim humor, it was hard to say what else it could be.

"Get me a drink," he said huskily, nodding toward the tantalus on the side table, "and I'll tell you the whole damned yarn. My God, I'm as dry as a damned bone!"

"Give me the key of the tantalus," said Carrington promptly.

But the superintendent seemed somewhat taken aback.

"Anything you say may be used against you," he reminded the prisoner.

"You know enough to swing me, anyhow," said Rattar, "but I'd like you to know that I didn't really mean to do it! I want that drink first, though!"

He took the glass of whisky and water and, as he raised it to his lips, that same curious look came back into his eye.

"Here's to the firm of S. & G. Rattar, and may their clients be as damned as themselves!" he said with a glance at Cromarty, and finished the drink at a draft.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"I needn't trouble you with my adventures before I came down here to visit brother Simon," began the prisoner, "for you know them well enough. It was about a month ago when I turned up at this house one night."

"How did you get here?" demanded the superintendent.

"I did the last bit under the seat of the carriage," grinned Rattar, "and when we got into the station I hopped out on the wrong side of the train. The way I paid my fare wasn't bad, either, considering I hadn't half of the fare from London in my pocket when I started—or anything like it. However, the point is I got here, and just as I'd come through the gates I had the luck to see both the maids going out. So the coast was clear."

"Well, I rang the bell and out came Simon—the man who'd got me convicted, and my own brother, too, mind you—looking as smug as the hard-hearted old humbug he was. He got the shock of his life when he saw who it was, but I began gently and I put a proposition to him. I'll bet none of you will guess what it was!"

He looked round the company, and Carrington answered:

"Blackmail of some sort."

"You may call it blackmail if you like, but what was the sort? Well, you'd never guess! I was wearing a beard and mustaches then, but I knew if I took them off I'd look so like Simon that no one meeting one of us would know which it was, supposing we were

dressed exactly alike and I did Simon's grunting tricks and all that. And Simon knew it, too!

"Well, Simon, my dear brother," I said to him, 'I'll make you a sporting proposition. My idea is to settle down in this old place, and I'm so fond of you I mean to shave, get an outfit just like yours, and give free rein to my affection for you. I'm so fond of you,' I said, 'that I know I shan't be able to keep more than five yards away from you whenever you are walking the streets, and I'll have to sit in church beside you, Simon. That's my present program.'

"I let that sink in, and then I went on.

"Supposing this program embarrasses you, Simon—well, there's one way out of it, and I leave it to your judgment to say what it is.'

"Now, mind you, I'd banked on this coming off, for I knew what a stickler Simon was for the respectable and the conventional and all that. Can't you see the two of us going through the streets together, five yards apart and dressed exactly alike! Wouldn't the small boys have liked it! That was my only idea in coming down here. I meant no more mischief, I'll swear to that! Unfortunately, though, I'd got so keen on the scheme that I hadn't thought of its weak spot.

"Simon said not a word, but just looked at me, exactly as I've been looking at people since I took his place in society. And then he asked me if I was really very hard up. Like a fool, I told him the plain truth, that I had inside of five bob in my pockets and that was every penny I owned in the world.

"He grinned then—I can see him grinning now—and he said:

"In that case, you'll have a little difficulty in paying your board and lodging here, and still more in buying clothes! I tell you what I'll do,' he said, 'I'll buy a ticket back to London

for you and leave it with the station master, and that's every penny you'll ever get out of me!'

"I saw he had me, but I wasn't going off on those terms. I damned him to his face and he tried to shut the door on me. We were talking at the front door all this while, I may mention. I got my foot in the way, and as I was always a bit stronger than Simon, I had that door open after a tussle, and then I followed him into the library.

"I knew the man was hard as flint and never had showed mercy to any one in his life when he had them on toast, and I knew he had me on toast. How was I to get any change out of him? That was what I was wondering as I followed him, and then all at once something—the devil, if you like—put the idea into my head. I'd *be* Simon!"

He looked round on his audience as though he still relished the memory of that inspiration.

"The beauty of the idea was that no one would ever dream of suspecting a man of not being himself! They might suspect him of a lot of things, but not of that. I hadn't thought of the scheme ten seconds before I realized how dead safe it was, as long as I kept my head. And I have kept it! No one can deny that!"

His glance this time challenged a contradiction, but no one spoke. The circle of steadfast eyes and silent lips he seemed to take as a tribute to his address, for he smiled and then went on:

"Yes, I kept my head from the beginning. I stood talking to him in this very room, he refusing to answer anything except to repeat that he'd buy a ticket to London and leave it with the station master, and I working out the scheme—what to do it with and how to manage afterward. I knew it was a swinging risk, but against that was a starving certainty; and then I spied that match box, and the thing was settled. I got him to look the other

way for a moment—and then he was settled. Give me another drink!"

Carrington got him a drink and he gulped it down, and then he turned suddenly on Ned Cromarty.

"Your damned glass eye has been getting on my nerves long enough!" he exclaimed. "My God, that eye and your habit of hanging people—I've had enough of them! Can't you turn it away from me?"

"Won't turn," said Ned coolly, "spring broken. Get on with your story!"

Even in his privileged position as prisoner, Rattar seemed disinclined to have trouble with his formidable ex-client. He answered nothing, but turned his shoulder to him and continued:

"After that was over I set about covering my tracks. The first part was the worst. Before the maids came back I had to get Simon stowed away for the night—no time to bury him then, of course—and I had to get into his clothes, shave, and learn the lie of the house and all that. I did it all right, and came down to breakfast next morning and passed muster with the servants, and never a suspicion raised!"

"There was a little," remarked Carrington, "but never enough."

"Not enough was good enough!"

"I'm not quite certain of that," said Carrington. "However, go on. Your next bunker was the office."

The prisoner nodded.

"It took some nerve," he said complacently, "and I'm free to confess that, to begin with, I always had a beastly feeling that some one was watching me and spotting something that didn't look quite right, but, good heavens! keeping my head the way I kept it, there was nothing to worry about! Who would ever think that the Simon Rattar who walked into his office and grunted at his clerks on Wednesday morning, wasn't the same Simon Rattar who

walked in and grunted on Tuesday morning? And then, I had one tremendous pull in knowing all the ropes from old days.

"Simon was a conservative man. Nothing was ever changed—not even the clerks—so I had the whole routine at my fingers. And he was an easy man to imitate, too. That was where I scored again. I dare say I have inherited some of the same tricks myself. I know I found them come quite easy—the stare and the silence and the grunts and the rest of them. And then I always had more brains than Simon, and could pick up business quicker. You should have heard me making that ass, Malcolm Cromarty, and the Farmond girl, and this hangman with the glass eye tell me all about themselves and what their business was, without their ever suspecting they were being pumped! For, mind you, I'd never set eyes on Malcolm Cromarty or the Farmond girl before in my life! No, it wasn't at the office I had the nastiest time. It was burying the body."

The boastful smile died off his lips and for a moment he shivered a little.

"What happened about that?" inquired Carrington keenly.

"When I got home that afternoon I found he wasn't quite dead after all!"

"That accounts for it!" murmured Carrington.

"For what?"

"Your maid heard him moving."

The prisoner seemed to have recovered from his passing emotion.

"And I told her it was a rat, and she swallowed it!" he laughed. "Well, he didn't move for long, and I had fixed up quite a good scheme for getting him out of the house. A man was to call for old papers. I even did two voices talking in the hall to make the bluff complete! Not being able to get his ring off his finger rather worried me, but I put that right by an advertisement in the paper saying I'd lost it!"

He was arrested by the look on Carrington's face.

"What happened?" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that gave me away?"

"Those superfluous precautions generally give people away."

"But how?"

"It doesn't matter now. You'll learn later. What next?"

"Next?" said Rattar. "Well, I just went on keeping my head and bluffing people." He broke off, looked at Superintendent Sutherland, and gave a short laugh. "I only lost my nerve a bit once, and that was when the glass-eyed hangman butted in and said he was going to get down a detective. It struck me then it was time I was off—and what's more, I started!"

The superintendent's mouth opened.

"You—you weren't the man—" he began.

"Yes," scoffed the prisoner, "I was the man with the toothache in that empty carriage. I'd got in at the wrong side after the ticket collector passed and just about twenty seconds before you opened the door. But the sight of your red face made me change my plans, and I was out again before that train started! A bright policeman you are! After that, I decided to stick it out and face the music; and I faced it."

His mouth shut tight and he sat back in his chair, his eyes traveling round the others as though to mark their unwilling admiration. He certainly saw it in the faces of the two open-eyed policemen, but Cromarty's was hard and set, and he seemed still to be waiting.

"You haven't told us about Sir Reginald yet," he said.

Rattar looked at him defiantly.

"No evidence there," he said with a cunning shake of his head. "You can go on guessing!"

"Would you like to smoke a pipe?" asked Carrington suddenly.

The man's eyes gleamed.

"By God, yes!"

"You can have one if you tell us about Sir Reginald. We've got you anyhow, and there will be evidence enough there, too, when we've put it together."

The superintendent looked a trifle shocked, but Carrington's sway over him was by this time evidently unbounded. He coughed an official protest but said nothing.

The prisoner only hesitated for a moment. He saw Carrington taking out a cigarette, and then he took out his keys and said:

"This is the key for that drawer. You'll find my pipe and baccy there. I'll tell you the rest." And then he started and exclaimed: "but how the devil did you know I smoked?"

"At five minutes past nine o'clock last night," said Carrington, as he handed him his pipe, "I was within three paces of you."

The prisoner stared at him with a wry face.

"You devil!" he murmured, and then added with some philosophy: "After all, I'd sooner be hanged than stop smoking." And with that he lit his pipe.

"You want to know about old Cromarty," he resumed. "Well, I made my first bad break when I carried on a correspondence with him which Simon had begun, not knowing they had had a talk betweenwhiles canceling the whole thing. You know about it and about the letter Sir Reginald sent me after I'd written. Well, when I got that letter I admit it rattled me a bit. I've often wondered since whether he had really suspected anything or whether he would have sooner or later. Anyhow, I got it into my head that the game was up if something didn't happen. And so it happened."

"You went and killed him?" said Ned.

"That's for you and your glass eye to find out!" snapped the prisoner.

"Take his pipe away," said Carrington quietly.

"Damn it!" cried Rattar. "I'll tell you, only I'm fed up with that man's bullying! I put it in a stocking"—he nodded toward the match box—"just as you guessed, and I went out to Keldale that night. My God, what a walk that was in the dark! I'd half forgotten the way down to the house and I thought every other tree was a man watching me. I don't know yet how I got to that library window. I remembered his ways and I thought he'd be sitting up there alone; but it was just a chance, and I'd no idea I'd have the luck to pick a night when he was sleeping in his dressing room. Give me another drink!"

Carrington promptly brought one and again it vanished almost in a gulp.

"Well, I saw him through a gap in the curtains and I risked a tap on the glass. My God, how surprised he was to see me standing there! I grinned at him and he let me in, and then—" He broke off and fell forward in his chair with his face in his hands. "This whisky has gone to my head!" he muttered. "You've mixed it too damned strong!"

Ned Cromarty sprang up, but Carrington caught him by the arm.

"Let's come away," he said quietly. "We've heard everything necessary. You can't touch him now."

Cromarty let him keep his arm through his as they went to the door.

"I'll send a cab up for you in a few minutes," Carrington added to the superintendent.

They left the prisoner still sitting muttering into his hands.

CHAPTER XL.

On their way down to the hotel Ned Cromarty only spoke once, and that was to exclaim:

"If I'd only known when I had him alone! Why didn't you tell me more before I went in?"

"For your own sake," said Carrington gently. "The law is so devilish indiscriminating. Also, I wasn't absolutely certain then myself."

They said nothing more till they were seated in Carrington's sitting room and his employer had got a cigar between his teeth and pushed away an empty tumbler.

"I'm beginning to feel a bit better," said he. "Fire away now and tell me how you managed this trick. I'd like to see just how derved stupid I've been!"

"My dear fellow, I assure you you haven't! I'm a professional at this game, and I tell you honestly it was as much good luck as good guidance that put me on to the truth at last."

"I wonder what you call luck," said Ned. "Seems to me you were up against it all the time! You've told me how you caught Rattar lying at the start. Well, that was pretty smart of you to begin with. Then, what next? How did things come?"

"Well," said Carrington, "I picked up a little something on my first visit to Keldale. From Bisset's description I gathered that the body must have been dragged along the floor and left near the door. Why? Obviously as a blind. Adding that fact to the unfastened window, the broken table, the mud on the floor, and the hearth brush, the odds seemed heavy on entry by the window. I also found that the middle blind had been out of order that night and that it *might* have been quite possible for any one outside to have seen Sir Reginald sitting in the room and known he was alone there. Again, it seemed long odds on his having recognized the man outside and opened the window himself, which, again, pointed to the man being some one he knew quite well and never suspected mischief from."

"Those were always my own ideas, except that I felt bamboozled where you felt clear—which shows the difference between our brains!"

Carrington laughed.

"I wish I could think so! No, no, it's merely a case of every man to his own trade. And, as a matter of fact, I was left just as bamboozled as you were. For who could this mysterious man be? Of the people inside the house, I had struck out Miss Farmond, Bisset, Lady Cromarty, and all the female servants. Only Sir Malcolm was left. I wired for him to come up and was able to score him out, too. I also visited you and scored you out. So there I was—with no conceivable criminal!"

"But you'd already begun to suspect Rattar, hadn't you?"

"I knew he had lied about engaging me; I discovered from Lady Cromarty that he had told her of Sir Malcolm's engagement to Miss Farmond; and I suspected he had started her suspicions of them. I saw that he was set on that theory, in spite of the fact that it was palpably improbable if one actually knew the people. Of course, if one didn't, it was plausible enough.

"When I first came down here it seemed to me a very likely theory, and I was prepared to find a guilty couple, but when I met Miss Farmond and told her suddenly that Sir Malcolm was arrested, and she gazed blankly at me and asked: 'What for?', well, I simply ran my pencil, so to speak, through her name and there was an end of her! The same with Sir Malcolm when I met him. And yet here was the family lawyer, who knew them both perfectly, so convinced of their guilt that he was obviously stifling investigation in any other direction. And on top of all that, all my natural instincts and intuitions told me that the man was a bad hat."

"But didn't all that make you suspect him?"

"Of what? Of leaving his respectable villa at the dead of night, tramping several miles, at his age, in the dark, and deliberately murdering his own best client and old friend under circumstances so risky to himself that only a combination of lucky chances saw him safely through the adventure? Nothing—absolutely nothing but homicidal mania could possibly account for such a performance, and the man was obviously as sane as you or I. I felt certain that there was something wrong somewhere, but as for suspecting him of being the principal in the crime, the idea was stark lunacy!"

"By George, it was a tough proposition!" said Ned. "By the way, had you heard of George Rattar at that time?"

"Oh, yes, I heard of him, and knew they resembled one another, but as I was told that he had left the place years ago and was now dead, my thoughts never even once ran in that direction until I got into a state of desperation, and then I merely surmised that his misdeeds might have been at the bottom of some difficulty between Simon and Sir Reginald."

"Then how on earth did you ever get on to the right track?"

"I never would have if the man hadn't given himself away. To begin with, he was fool enough to fall in with my perfectly genuine assumption that he was either employing me or acting for my employer. No doubt he stood to score if the bluff had come off, and he banked on your stipulation that your name shouldn't appear. But if he had only been honest in that matter, my suspicions would never have started—not at that point anyhow."

"That was Providence, sure!" said Ned with conviction.

"I'm inclined to think it was," agreed Carrington. "Then again, his advice to Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond was well enough designed to further his own scheme of throwing suspicion on them,

but it simply ended in his being bowled out both times, and throwing the suspicion on himself. But *the* precaution which actually gave him away was putting in that advertisement about his ring."

"I was just wondering," said Ned, "how that did the trick."

"By the merest fluke. I noticed it when I was making inquiries at the police office on quite different lines, but you can imagine that I switched off my other inquiries pretty quick when Superintendent Sutherland calmly advanced the theory that the ring was stolen when Rattar's house was entered by some one unknown on the very night of the murder!"

"This is the first I've heard of that!" cried Ned.

"It was the first I had, but it led me straight to Rattar's house, and I had a long heart to heart talk there with his housemaid. That was when I collected that extraordinary mixed bag of information which I was wondering yesterday whether to believe or not. Here are the items, and you can judge for yourself what my state of mind was when I was carrying about the following precious pieces of information."

He ticked the items off on his fingers.

"A mysterious man who entered the garden one night and left his footprints in the gravel, and whose visit had a strange and mysterious effect on Rattar. Funny feelings produced in the bosom of the housemaid by the presence of her master. Doors of unused rooms mysteriously locked, and keys taken away; old papers said to be inside. Mysterious visit of mysterious man at dead of night to remove the said papers. A ring that couldn't come off the owner's finger mysteriously lost. Mysterious burglary on night of the murder by mysterious burglar who left all windows and doors locked behind him and took nothing away. Mysterious perambulations of his garden every

night at nine o'clock by Mr. Simon Rattar."

"Great Scot!" murmured Cromarty.

"I have given you the items in what turned out to be their order of date, but I got them higgledy-piggledy and served up in a sauce of mystery and trembly sensations that left me utterly flummoxed as to how much, if anything, was sober fact. However, I began by fastening on to two things. The first was the burglary, which, of course, at once suggested the possibility that the man who had committed the crime at Keldale had returned to Rattar's house and got in by that window. The second was the nightly perambulations, which could easily be tested. When Mr. Rattar emerged at nine that night, I was in the garden before him. And what do you think he did?"

"Had a look at his brother's grave?"

"Smoked two pipes of tobacco! A man who was an anti-tobacco fanatic! The truth hit me straight in the eye: 'That man is not Simon Rattar!' And then, of course, everything dropped into its place. The ex-convict twin brother, the only evidence of whose supposititious death was an announcement in the paper, obviously put in as a blind. The personal resemblance between the two. All the yarns told me by the housemaid, including the strange visitor—George, of course, arriving; the man who came for the papers—George himself taking out the body; and the vanished ring. Everything fitted in now, and the correspondence between Sir Reginald and Rattar which had beaten me before, gave the clew at once as to motive."

"I guess you felt you had deserved a drink that trip!" said Ned.

"I didn't stop to have my drink. I went straight off to see old Ison and pumped him for the rest of the evening. He wasn't very helpful, but everything I could get out of him went to confirm my theory. I found for certain

that Simon Rattar had never smoked in his life, and that George used to be a heavy smoker. I also learned that a few recent peculiarities of conduct had struck the not too observant Ison, one being very suggestive. Rattar, it seemed, kept an old pair of kid gloves in his desk which he was in the habit of wearing when he was alone in the office."

"Don't quite see the bearing of that."

"Well, on my hypothesis, it was to avoid leaving finger marks. You see, George was an ex-convict. It was a very judicious precaution, too, and made it extremely difficult to catch him out by that means, for one could scarcely approach a respectable solicitor and ask him for an impression of his fingers! And anyhow, nothing could be definitely proved against him until we had found Simon's body. That was the next problem. Where had he hidden it?"

"And how did you get at that?"

"Guessed it. At first, my thoughts went too far afield, but when I went over the times mentioned in the maid's story of the man who took away the papers, and the fact that she heard no sound of a wheeled vehicle, I realized that he must have simply planted it in one of the flower beds. This morning I prodded them all with a stout walking stick and found the spot. Then I talked like a father to old Sutherland

and fixed everything up with him. And then I sent my wire to you."

"And you deliberately tell me you got there as much by good luck as good guidance?"

"I can see the luck at every turn," Carrington answered, "and though I'd like to believe in the guidance, I'm hanged if it's quite as distinct!"

"If you are telling me the neat, unvarnished truth, Carrington," said his admiring employer, "I can only say that you've a lot to learn about your own abilities—and I hope to Heaven you'll never learn it!"

"But I assure you there are some people who think me conceited!"

"There are guys of all sorts in the world," said Ned. "For instance, there's a girl who has mistaken me for a daisy, and I've got to get back to her now. Good night! I won't say 'Thanks' because I can't shout it loud enough."

When his gig lamps had flashed up the silent street and Carrington had turned back from the pavement into the hotel, he met his friend Miss Peterkin.

"Mr. Cromarty's late to-night," said she. "A fine gentleman, that! I always say there are few like Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland."

"That's lucky for me!" said Carrington with a smile. "My business in life would be gone if there were!"

THE END.





AT THE STARS SAY

by Madame Renée Lonquille

Would you know yourself—your character, your disposition, your traits, your lucky days? Would you know some of the things that are likely to happen to you in the future? If so, you will be interested in following each month Madame Lonquille's articles on Astrology. The series began last March, with the sign of Aquarius.

CAPRICORN

BETWEEN December 21st and January 19th the Sun passes through the constellation or group of fixed stars called Capricorn. This is the tenth sign of the Zodiac, a cardinal, earthy sign, and the first of the "serving trinity." The slow, cold, barren Saturn is the ruler.

Capricorn is not very liberal in the way of physical beauty, and if other planetary influences do not assist these natives, they are likely to be short, thin, sometimes even ill-formed people with long, thin faces, rather pointed chins, and if men, thin, scraggly beards. This sign rules the knees and, if the Sun is afflicted by other planets, the natives will have a peculiar gait or trouble with the knees. Notice how often these people are as capricious as the goat which represents them, and how they nod on one side occasionally, as if prepared to butt. Their minds are very subtle, and they have a peculiar sense of humor all their own, and their wit sometimes passes completely over the heads of their associates.

The character of people born at this time of any year is decided, pronounced, and strong. Not very often

do we find any weak, wavering, spiritless individuals having their homes in this sign. Although they are not forward or given to original thought and enterprise, they probably attain as great heights as any of their brothers born in a more aggressive sign. These natives are content to gain by a slow, persistent effort that is unobserved by those around them until by thrift and great economy a position in life is reached that surprises their friends. It is said that the Capricorns can make a dollar do more work and get better results than natives of any other sign of the Zodiac. In their slow but sure progress, through prudence and attention to detail, they make every cent buy its most, and they are at the same time generous, good-hearted individuals. Daydreaming is not a trait of this sign. Natives are not content with ideas that cannot be put into practice. They are profound, sane thinkers, often making brilliant, convincing orators. Although they appreciate affection and will give much in return, their Saturnine natures dislike too much demonstration in public.

Of course, an extreme Capricorn ten-

density will make drudges and toilers, who are contented only when they are laboring, even if to no definite end. On the other hand, there are those who shoulder heavy responsibilities, and rule others with a steady, iron hand. The higher types of Capricorn natives work hard to gain along intellectual lines.

Often the Saturnine qualities of this sign afflict the natives, causing them to show the cold, crafty, jealous side of Saturn, which drives away friends and helpers. Naturally we all look for the cheerful associate and shun these morose, repining natures. Neglect causes them to sink deeper into the black mood, and unless they exert themselves to rise above the adverse characteristic of Capricorn, they soon find they are friendless and alone. The afflicted native might be helped by consideration of the old but true saying that "more flies can be caught with molasses than vinegar." No one suffers more from neglect, both mentally and physically, than do these Capricorn natures.

In summing up the general characteristics of the sign, those who draw the best from this constellation are found to have a profound reasoning power. They will be surrounded by good, true conditions, and will love to give and teach all truth with untiring effort, never thinking of reward. Then again, if these natives of Capricorn respond to the unfavorable vibrations, they are all self and suffer much on this account. They are diggers and plodders and will find themselves in low, menial servitude.

DECANATES.

To get a little nearer the general character of the individuals, this sign, as all the others, is divided into three decanates or periods of about ten days. Each division emphasizes or subdues the general qualities of the whole sign.

The first division is the last ten days

of December. All those born at this time are never quite sure in deciding any question, and, in their hesitating tendency, often lose many a good opportunity. They see their mistakes when it is too late, and in trying to right the wrong they become confused and unreliable. This same tendency is very marked in their affections, and they are sure to suffer many sorrows.

Those born between January 1st and January 10th are hard to convince that any way but their own is right. They go through life working laboriously and slowly, but generally accomplish a work that is not easily torn down. They cannot be said to be overenterprising, and their minds seem to be centered on labor.

Those born between the 10th and 19th of January are very sensitive, even timid, but at the same time are aware of all that is going on around them and much more, for there is a tendency to be suspicious. They are the most ambitious people of the sign, but often fail to grasp a chance to improve themselves on account of their desire to investigate thoroughly before taking any risks. They will be more fortunate, however, if they were born between midnight and noon.

CHILDREN.

As Saturn rules these children, they may often possess sad, melancholy-looking little faces, but on closer acquaintance they are found to respond to fun and merriment as readily as many of their brothers and sisters of more light-hearted signs. They are never so attractive as their little friends born in Leo or Aries; therefore they never receive the attention or flattery, and they seem to feel this omission. They are not at their best among strangers, but are far from dull or timid after they become a little used to the same people. In school they are slow but sure, always attentive to their

studies, and they work with a persistent, steady energy which is sure to reach the goal, though without any great show. They are able to explain deep, perplexing problems which are often too much for the supposedly brilliant ones of the class. These children are always the ones to stay after school and help the teacher, because they love work as the others love play. Their greatest fault may be their tendency to domineer, especially their playmates, for they seem to feel older and steadier and they show it in this way.

EMPLOYMENT.

These people should be employed where slow, careful, cautious efforts are needed. They have a wonderful sense of money values, and know how to plan to get the most out of the smallest sum. They are exceedingly ambitious in a certain way, and make the most out of their position in life, and often accumulate large fortunes. As teachers, orators, politicians, contractors, or farmers they are sure to succeed. Their methods are never dashing or daring, but are slow, conservative, and sure.

Many of these types of people dislike taking orders from others and grow impatient and suspicious when placed in inferior positions. Their well-thought-out plans for work can hardly be improved upon. The Capricorns will, therefore, do their best work when directing others. They are not lacking in self-reliance. In fact, often they have a marked tendency toward self-sufficiency, and this trait often causes them to be judged as obstinate. The characteristics of the goat and his ability to butt all obstacles placed in his path must be remembered.

FRIENDS, LOVE, AND MARRIAGE.

The cold, dark Saturn, the planet of privation, obstacles, and denials, being ruler over this constellation, naturally

has much influence over the marriage relations of these natives. They are not in any great hurry to marry, if they marry at all. However, they make faithful, steady, economical husbands or wives. Unless the marriage partner has the Sun in Virgo, which means that he must be born between August 22nd and September 21st of any year, not much happiness can be expected. Some astrologers claim that the signs Leo, from July 24th to August 22nd, and Taurus, from April 20th to May 19th, should be added. Natives of Capricorn will often find among their most congenial friends, however, those influenced by the constellations of Scorpio, between October 23rd and November 21st, Pisces, February 19th to March 20th, and Aquarius, January 21st to February 19th.

Although these natives of Capricorn are very slow to anger, they are just as slow to forgive, and hold in great contempt those who have injured them. It is best to keep them as friends, because if they are not of the higher type of Capricorn, they can be very dangerous enemies. Their anger and revenge are of the steady, crafty kind, which may do lasting harm to their enemies.

PREDICTIONS.

In youth these people are in great danger of wounds and accidents. There may be a severe illness, because in their early days the constitution is almost sure to be weak and puny. Many brothers and sisters may prove to be a handicap rather than a help, for very likely the Capricorns of the family are the ones to get the least favors. They are decidedly not the favorite ones in the home circle, unless exceptionally well-favored by other planetary positions. At school they are likely to be picked upon. Thus nature protected them with the characteristics of the goat. After the weak period is

passed, Capricorns can hold their own anywhere, and become strong, respected, clever individuals.

Much depends on the natives themselves, and how they use the many talents of this versatile sign. Success and prosperity is predicted, however, through their untiring efforts and probably late in life. Not many windfalls in the way of gifts or legacies will come to them. Changes and journeying may be foretold, but there are no long voyages of importance probable. Mystery may often surround these travels, which are not always fortunate. The immediate family may interfere often and in many ways and spoil hopeful schemes. There may not be much happiness through children, or there may be separation from or loss of them. The number of children, if any, is not very great, possibly two or three at the most, for Capricorn is not a prolific sign. Finally, natives will triumph over all adverse conditions and live to enjoy a healthy, strong, useful old age of probably ninety or a hundred years.

NOTED PEOPLE.

There are many people of note who have shown the persistent, steady, understanding characteristics of this constellation of obstacles—the "never-say-die" quality. Joan of Arc was a Capricorn, a good example of the calm, self-confident grit of the sign. Among others were Sir Isaac Newton, the astronomer, John Hancock, the first signer of our Declaration of Independence, Admiral George Dewey, and Rudyard Kipling, the writer.

When born in this division of the Zodiac, it is well to remember that the fortunate day of the week is Saturday. Any journeys or changes of any kind should be undertaken on this day for success and good luck. The gem to be worn is the moonstone. The color is green. The flowers of this sign are

the white poppy, flax, holly, and sometimes the white rose.

HEALTH AND DISEASE.

Persons born in this sign of the Zodiac usually live to be very old. They seem to have a particular hold on life, especially after the age of fifteen. Up to this time their health sometimes is very delicate. As children they are subject to many colds. There is also great danger from falls and bruises. When they are grown men and women, however, their worst foe to health is a tendency to melancholia, and this the natives of Capricorn will find hard to overcome. If the Sun is afflicted on their life chart, they also suffer from diseases of the knees or may have an accident to these parts. The skin is sometimes a source of slight trouble. If these natives reach the ages of ninety or more, which they so often do, it will be no surprise to find them with all their faculties still in use. To preserve health, the best remedies for these people are cheerful, happy surroundings and companions, plenty of work to keep them busy, giving them no time to despond or give way to jealous thoughts. Of course, planetary positions on their charts may help to overcome these tendencies, and in that case long, healthy lives will be theirs.

Answers to Correspondents.

L. C. T., Born January 16, 1896, Brooklyn, New York.—At the time of your birth Mercury and the Moon were in conjunction on the Eastern horizon in the airy sign Aquarius. This position of the planets tends to make you very clever, quick in wit, sharp, and penetrating. You can learn foreign languages with ease. Your splendid abilities, however, are somewhat scattered and not always put to the best use. Saturn afflicts the two planets in conjunction, which will cause a depressed mind many times, poor circulation, and Scorpio diseases, such as infections and surgical operations in the region of the kidneys.

The Sun in Capricorn, in good aspect to Uranus, ought to bring you benefit from

strangers, or in public or governmental employment. You will probably have more than one serious love affair or marriage. One marriage partner will be a short, well-proportioned person with rather full, commanding eyes, of a free and courageous disposition, and probably from a great distance, possibly a foreigner. You probably have many good friends among martial people. Certainly this year ought to bring you something quite out of the ordinary. Great mental activity is shown, and relief from the unfavorable conditions that have been surrounding you for the last two years.

H. C., Born January 12, 1882, 12 noon, Sweden.—Your chart shows many strong, decided, but sad aspects. At your birth, the Sun was afflicted by the Moon, and the Moon, in turn, badly aspected by Mercury. Your mind is apt to be very critical, or perhaps too sensitive, causing you to seem irritable and nervous at times. You are diplomatic, profound, and somewhat ambitious to gain honors and education. Venus seems to be the kindest planet to you, and some time in your life will surely bring you a legacy or money, either through marriage or some peculiar or religious person. Your expenses, however, will be heavy, and several sorrowful home episodes will cause you to part with most of the gain. Several love affairs are indicated, and one might be with a relative.

Around your thirty-seventh year, I think, the Moon brings you one of the biggest, fullest years of your life. A great change or unsettled condition will occur, and you must guard your health. You may look for many events to happen within the next five years, most of them very happy and favorable. Friends play an important part in your life during the next five years.

M. C., Born December 25, 1883, Washing-

ton, D. C.—Sagittarius was rising at the time of your birth and the Sun in the first house in Capricorn and the Moon in Scorpio. From these positions, I should judge you to be very clever and artistic. Your personality, however, is a bit overanxious and at times you might feel you were not getting a square deal in the world. The positions of others seem to you to be superior, even when they indicate less ability. This might cause you to feel envious or jealous. You should guard yourself against secret enmity and acquaintance.

The Sun gives you quite a degree of pride and also good health, but the Moon, being afflicted by Mars, would cause sharp pains and distress in the abdomen periodically. The position of Venus on your chart shows you to gain money through public enterprises, elders, or perhaps a small legacy from a parent, probably the father. There are indications of some romantic attachment with some one at a distance or born far from your home. You might marry twice, once to a person much older or weaker in health. There is some hindrance shown on account of age, money, or parents. You will probably have many dual experiences on account of marriage or have too many irons in the fire, and this will interfere with your health.

I find in your thirty-sixth year the Moon, while passing through your house of "letters, papers, near relatives, and short journeys," comes into conjunction with Venus, which brings good luck and fortune along these particular lines. One little period of depression also occurs when the Moon squares Saturn, causing a bad cold or worry and strain from overwork. A strong influence comes into your life when you are thirty-eight, affecting your father or husband, perhaps in the way of a loss or quarrel.



A TRAGEDY

I AM going to kill Redway.

He has wrecked my life with his handsome face and fascinating ways. He knew how I loved her, what a delight and joy she was to me. He knew the deep anguish her loss would cause me, that with her would depart all the sunshine from our little home. Yet, knowing all this, he has robbed me of her, heartless home-wrecker that he is. My soul is dead within me.

I am going to kill Redway.

Last night he eloped with my cook.

H. K. WELLS.

Words, Just Words

A Dialogue
Between
Two People



by
Carl
Glick

Suffice to say that, since there are only two persons in this dialogue, they are a He and a She.

The scene is in the hall just outside of a lawyer's office, a very prosperous lawyer, for the hall is a very prosperous hall. The lawyer himself does not appear in the dialogue, but he is the villain, nevertheless. There are no chairs about, naturally, as this is a hall. No pictures. Just plain walls and marble floors. But, to create suspense, place an elevator shaft at the right, and at the left the entrance into the lawyer's office. And let sounds of the city street be faintly heard, just loud enough to let us know that life with its prose goes on—even if poetry stops for a few moments to take breath in the hall of an office building.

He is pacing up and down, looking at the door of the lawyer's rooms. A good-looking He, well groomed, gloves, hat, flower in buttonhole. Rather a worried look on his otherwise self-complacent face. But his eyebrows are straight, nevertheless. Nothing ever ruffles them. From the door on the left, SHE comes. Very pert. Stunningly gowned. No woman would dress like that for her lover. It might encourage him. Dressed as only a woman who sees her attorney or her doctor will dress. When He sees her, He stops, blocking the way to the elevator. SHE almost runs into him, then, seeing who it is, takes a step back and looks him over.

SHE: Oh—it's you.

HE: Whom did you expect to see?
(No jealousy displayed, just a question.)

SHE: I don't know. Anybody but you—here.

HE (critically): Well, what should I be doing? Killing myself some place else?

SHE (implying much more): I

hardly know. (Then cheerfully) Well, I have it—our divorce decree. We are no longer man and wife.

(He says nothing.)

SHE: Well, why don't you say something?

HE: What do you want me to say?
(Fair enough.)

SHE: I don't care—only something.

HE: Well, if I said I was sorry we

were no longer man and wife, you'd be insulted. And if I said I was glad of it, you'd be insulted. So I maintain a perfectly indiscreet silence.

SHE (*making no effort to go*): I've always maintained you weren't a gentleman.

HE (*stopping her from going, nevertheless*): Don't go. Let's talk this thing over.

SHE: Not unless you promise to treat me with respect.

HE: That I can easily do, as we are no longer married.

SHE (*filling up a pause with words, just words*): I suppose you mean to imply that, while we were married, you deliberately tried to treat me with disrespect.

HE: Exactly.

SHE: I wish I had a legal right! I'd slap your face for that!

HE: That's why I said it. Now that we're no longer married, you can't slap my face, and I can't sue for divorce.

SHE: It was I who sued for the divorce.

HE: Have it your own way. Noticed, didn't you, that I didn't try to stop you? But now it's all over. Let's tell each other the truth.

SHE: The truth? (*With innocent eyes*) I always did!

HE: I want to know—just why you wanted to divorce me.

SHE: Am I to interpret that as a remark that will lead in time to retribution on your part, a desire to reform, and then a proposal of marriage?

HE: Never. I've been enjoying this past five minutes of freedom too much. And now that I have gotten rid of you—nothing could drag me back into the matrimonial yoke again. Don't be afraid on that score. (*She makes no reply.*) But tell me—just why was it you wanted me divorced?

SHE: You want the truth?

HE: Absolutely.

SHE: You won't be offended?

HE: Rather—flattered.

SHE (*after a long breath*): Well—I just simply couldn't stand you any more. You got on my nerves. You were always so correct, so precise. You never swore at me. You never threw things at me. You never struck me. You let me have my own way. You were never suspicious of me. (*He smiles to himself. Most uncomplimentary had she but seen that.*) Why, you were so decent to me, I hardly knew I was married to you! I simply couldn't stand it any longer! I wanted a man about the place, a real human he-man, not a figurehead!

HE: But you got the divorce on the grounds of cruel and inhuman treatment?

SHE: I did. I had to have some romance about you. And the judge was much more sympathetic. But it was true. You did treat me cruelly and inhumanly. You starved every bit of feminine nature in me. If I had kept on, I should have been a machine like yourself—a model wife.

HE: No. I don't think you would ever have been that. (*Dreamily*) I wish I had known that that was what you wanted. I've sworn at you under my breath often enough—and there have been times when I'd have enjoyed throwing things at you. And more than once it was all I could do to keep from striking you.

SHE: Well—why didn't you?

HE: I was afraid that, if I did, you'd divorce me for cruel and inhuman treatment.

SHE: It would have shown that you were alive, at any rate. And the worst crime of all against me was that you were never jealous of me—never suspicious.

HE (*and men can be catty when they choose*): No. I saw no reason why I should be.

SHE (*triumphant*): Ah, but you didn't know me!

HE (*slowly*): Yes, I did. I felt confident that I could trust you.

SHE: Little did you know the real depths of my nature!

HE: No! Thank God, I've missed the depths!

SHE: You seem bitter. (*Almost as much of a question as SHE can dare.*)

HE: I'm not. Just thankful. Well, good-by. I'm sorry that I didn't swear at you, throw things at you, and strike you. It would leave at least a pleasant memory for you. (*But HE makes no effort to get away.*)

SHE (*looking him over critically*): Why are you all dressed up this afternoon?

HE: I don't have to answer your questions any more. It's none of your business!

SHE (*taking a new interest in him*): You never wore clothes like that afternoons before.

HE: How do you know? You never saw me afternoons. I keep this suit at my office.

SHE: Oh, you beast! How long has that sort of thing been going on?

HE: None of your business.

SHE: You have no reason not to treat me like a lady—even if we are not married.

HE: Well—is it any of your business?

SHE: Not now, but it was once! Oh! (*A great light breaks.*) I see it all so clearly! No wonder you were so nice to me! No wonder you were so glad to get a divorce!

HE: Well—I'll have to tell the truth. This is a new suit. I just got it from the tailor's yesterday.

SHE: What tailor? Borden & Borden? They do such rotten work!

HE: No. Simpson & Simpson. You always wanted me to try them—and now that I was free, I thought I would.

SHE: Well—I'll say this—the suit fits.

HE: Doesn't it?

SHE (*looking him over again*): But why—why the flower in your button-hole? Do you wear those afternoons?

HE: No. I suppose I should tell you this is by way of celebration of my freedom, but that would be like flirting with a corpse. No, I'll tell you the truth. I have an appointment.

SHE: Are you thinking of marrying again?

HE: Hardly. Once was enough for me. (*Starts to go.*) Well, good-by. See you again some time—maybe.

SHE: Wait a minute. Tell me who it is you have an appointment with. Business?

HE: Hardly. I'm going to have tea.

SHE (*like a baffled tigress*): How long has this been going on? You've been deceiving me all this time! And I thought you tame! My God, I thought you too stupid even to flirt! You are a beast! No wonder you were so nice to me!

(*HE smiles and says nothing.*)

SHE: Poor, defenseless creature that I am! (*SHE begins to weep.*)

HE (*losing his temper*): Now see here! Don't be so damn' silly! You aren't married to me any longer. You have no interest in me any more—at all! I can go and come as I please—flirt with whom I please, and do just as I damn, damn please from now on. So don't behave like a child!

SHE: But it isn't that. To think (*sobbing*) that this has been going on all this time and I didn't know a thing about it! That you have been untrue to your vows to me!

HE: What are you talking about?

SHE: Merciful heavens! (*Looking at him in amazement between sobs.*) You don't mean to stand there and proclaim innocence—when your conduct has been so monstrous?

HE: I certainly see no reason why you should carry on like this.

SHE: When you've been taking this

creature to tea every afternoon—and all the time married to me! And then you see no reason why I should carry on!

HE: I never said I was taking any "creature" to tea. I just mentioned the fact that I was going to tea!

SHE: But what man wants to go to tea alone—with a flower in his button-hole?

HE: Lots of them do! We may go alone—but we never come away alone!

SHE: Oh, that's the way you work it, is it? (*Tears again.*) That's worse. Meeting some strange woman! It's a wonder you were never blackmailed! And then think of the scandal!

HE: Well—what interest have you in me any more?

SHE: I have lots of interest!

HE: Don't be such a damn' fool!

SHE (*terror in her eyes, and a voice full of horror*): Oh! Swearing at me! I shouldn't wonder but what you would strike me next! I have a good notion to go right back to my attorney and tell him!

HE: What's the use now? You've got your divorce—and I'm free! Thank the blessed stars, I'm free!

SHE: You seem to be glad to get rid of me.

HE: I am. Mighty glad—and thankful. I never could stand you. You got on my nerves. Always the same—so correct and precise! Never suspicious of me, never jealous! Well, good-by.

SHE (*drying her tears*): Wait a minute. Surely you haven't forgotten those early days, when we were happy together—the long hours in the moonlight, and the little notes you would leave by the boathouse?

HE: I have. A man soon forgets.

SHE (*softly and adorably feminine*): I shall never forget—no matter what happens.

HE (*carelessly*): All right. That's your privilege.

SHE: That evening in Venice, on our honeymoon—in the gondola—

HE: Oh, yes. I do remember.

SHE: I thought you would (*triumphantly*).

HE: I mentioned at the time what a striking-looking girl she was, leaning against that pier with the basket on her head.

SHE: Oh. It wasn't that at all I meant.

HE: Well, I don't remember.

SHE (*in tears again*): I am convinced now that you never loved me!

HE: I haven't time to argue that point with you now. Well, good-by. I suppose the attorney, or the courts, or whoever fixes those matters, will let me know about the alimony. Meanwhile, I'm off for the highroad of adventure, with all the weapons of singleness and the experience of a married man. And the first woman I meet— (*He blows a kiss into the air.*)

SHE (*stopping him as he starts for the elevator*): But—I forbid you!

HE (*laughing*): Forbid me? How can you? I'm no longer your husband—thank God!

SHE (*in tears again*): But you—you are my husband. They wouldn't give me my divorce!

(*A long pause, during which he looks at her, a poor, helpless little woman, tearful and lonely. He makes a movement as if he were going to take her into his arms, and then, with an effort of the will, puts his hands behind him, where they will be out of temptation.*)

HE: So! You were lying to me all the time!

SHE (*not at all conscience-stricken*): Yes. I wanted to see how you'd take it. And, oh, I found out! You no longer love me! And you had started to flirt with some other woman—just as if I had never meant anything to you!

HE: Yes. Just as if I had just come from your funeral.

SHE: I wish I *were* dead!

HE: H'm! What had we better do? You know what I think of you at least—now.

SHE: Yes, and if I had only known sooner!

HE: Well?

SHE: I would never have tried to divorce you! I'd have *made* you love me!

HE: As it is?

SHE: I suppose I can go home to mother's—and you can go ahead and divorce me on the grounds of desertion if you like! Anyway, that would put the blame on me, so if you wanted to get married again, no one could criticize. (*Her logic is beautiful!*)

HE: Yes, I suppose that would be best.

SHE (*looking up*): Oh—do you mean you really mean to divorce me?

HE: Didn't you just try that a little while ago?

SHE: But I didn't know then that you didn't love me.

HE: And if you had?

SHE: I wouldn't have divorced you.

HE (*very much perplexed*): Do you remember that evening in Cairo?

SHE (*wistfully*): Do I? I shall never forget it.

HE: You said that if ever the time should come when I didn't love you, if I were to tell you, you would let me go free?

SHE (*sadly*): Yes?

HE: Well—you lied to me about the divorce. I didn't know it. That's why I said all that I did. But I have had a table reserved, and what do you say to having tea with me?

SHE: You mean—you still love me?

HE (*who has grown wiser during the past half hour—much wiser*): I haven't said. But I'm willing to talk it over.

SHE: What a lark! (*Powdering her nose and getting ready for the conquest*) I'll go. (*As an afterthought*) Anyway, if I had got a divorce, it would have been only a scrap of paper.

HE (*moving with her toward the elevator*): Why?

SHE: You never could have kept it. You'd have broken it sure. (*Again the eternal Eve.*) I know you much, much better than you know yourself.

(*He frowns slightly, and wonders. But they move away. And there is no doubt that the conversation is continued at the tea table, and next day, and then the next day—and so on. And we never know which really wins!*)



BUBBLES

A WOMAN dreams of her first kiss, a man of his last.

A man-hater has been disappointed in a lover, and a woman-hater in love.

A lover calls his sweetheart's tears April showers; but the married man, when his wife weeps, flees as from a November storm.

Freddie wants to know if the owl is called a bird of wisdom because he is out all night.

Given her choice, the wise girl prefers a hammock to a hope chest.

Sarcasm and success are never bedfellows.



Anæmia in Girls and Young Women

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THE blood, a highly specialized tissue, is of such tremendous importance to the health and beauty of the body that a few facts regarding its nature should be known by every one.

So perfectly is the general balance of the blood stream maintained that the volume of blood constantly present varies very little in a state of health. At one time it was thought that the amount was materially increased in states of plethora, or full bloodedness, and decreased in anæmia, impoverishment of the blood. Recent researches disprove this, however.

Whence comes the blood? Its watery quality is derived from the lymph, another circulatory system about which we will have more to say by and by. The solid constituents of the blood, the corpuscles, form one of the most fascinating studies. It is pretty definitely established that in the adult, the red blood corpuscles arise from elements situated in the red bone marrow. Some authorities contend that these, as well

as immature, white corpuscles, are derived from a common ancestral cell.

The red corpuscle is, of course, the more important component of the blood, as it carries the hæmoglobin, or iron component, and exists alone or in combination with oxygen, which gives it its beautiful ruby-red color.

In the various forms of anæmia there is loss of hæmoglobin and very often a decreased number of red cells. In a healthy adult male these should number five million to the cubic millimeter, and in the healthy female four million five hundred thousand. The number varies slightly under certain perfectly normal conditions, but profoundly in many morbid states. A slight reduction occurs in pregnancy, menstruation, and lactation as well as in cases of poor nourishment, in fatigue, and at the height of digestion.

The drain upon the blood is for obvious reasons far greater in women than in men. Women should therefore strive to maintain this remarkable tissue at its best. Massage, electricity,

and cold bathing, increase the number of red corpuscles. General massage of the body twice a week is excellent routine treatment for enriching the blood, while daily cold bathing is an excellent means and in the reach of all.

Anna Held, whose recent death from an obscure blood-and-bone disease is still fresh in our minds, should be held up to every girl as an example of the frightful lengths to which personal vanity and ambition can lead one. Anna Held, the sprightly, the petite, the alluring bit of femininity, who by her languorous eyes, fascinating accent, curving bosom and hips, delighted audiences for many years, paid the price of outraged nature in months of frightful suffering. Her martyrdom was out of all proportion to the vanity which caused her so to maltreat and practically distort her body that she retained into maturity the wasplike waist and hour-glass figure with which she charmed. The compression of her bones interfered with the healthy function of red bone marrow, and gave rise to a very rare disease which baffled the medical profession for a long time.

The red marrow of bone is an astonishing substance, manufacturing red blood corpuscles, among them a type of cell the function of which, when fully developed, is supposedly to safeguard the body against poisons of a biochemical nature. Arrested in its growth, this cell may become malignant.

There are many forms of anæmia. Paleness of the skin and of the mucous membrane does not always mean anæmia. For instance, those who are constantly indoors, workers in a closed atmosphere, such as miners, prisoners, and others whose occupations, circumstances, or inclinations, keep them housed, rarely possess the bright, fresh, rosy hue of healthy, circulating blood. Some persons inherit peculiarities of the skin in which there is no network of tiny blood vessels imparting a good

color to the surface. Furthermore, certain diseases, other than anæmia, are characterized by extreme pallor and even waxiness of the skin. Pallor which accompanies the first stages of tuberculosis may simulate chlorotic paleness of face.

The most common form of anæmia is called *chlorosis*. It is peculiar to young girls during the years of puberty. Constipation is so prominent a symptom of anæmia that Sir Andrew Clark, a British physician, held it largely accountable for the condition. It may occur through several generations in one family and several girls in one family may be chlorotic. No walk of life is exempt from this ailment, but the poorer classes are the chief sufferers.

One often sees shopgirls waiting upon customers in so extreme a condition of anæmia that one marvels at the blindness or hard-heartedness of their employers and of the public at large. It is a significant fact that country lassies are rarely chlorotic. Why? Because exercise, fresh air, sunshine, plain, nourishing food such as the farm produces, all tend to make good blood and to keep the blood freely oxygenated. The result is wholesome facial coloring. In very rare cases of anæmia high color is evident, especially when the person is under exertion or excitement, but this flush is readily distinguishable from the red cheeks of health.

Chlorotic girls suffer from a great variety of symptoms. In working girls, the mental stagnation, caused by a life of monotonous grind, frequently dulls the senses so that the subject is apparently unaware of her unhealthful condition. Among schoolgirls and in the better classes the associated symptoms such as breathlessness, palpitation, and vertigo frequently cause considerable alarm.

In some chlorotic girls the gastrointestinal symptoms are the most evident. The appetite is capricious—ab-

surdly so at times, when pickles and candy are deemed far more palatable than roast beef and baked potato. There is much stomachic distress. The gastric juices contain too much acid. Burning pain, flatulence, eructations of hot, brashy gas and even of water, result. The stomach may become dilated and relaxed from loss of muscular tone, leading to a condition known as "gastroptosis," or falling of the stomach. In some cases movable right kidney exists.

There are chlorotic girls in whom the heart symptoms are most prominent. The simple procedure of ascending the stairs rapidly, as youth will, brings on difficulty of breathing, fluttering, or palpitation, and sometimes pain in the heart region. The pulse is often rapid or intermittent, and discernible to the eye in the face, neck, and chest, especially. In some anæmic girls the thyroid gland is prominent and a distinct pulsation may be felt in it.

In these cases, on examination, a loud, continuous hum is heard over the jugular vein on the right side, called *humming-top murmur*. Heart murmurs are not uncommon, but they differ from the murmurs present in organic heart disease, although the latter may be associated with a state of anæmia, especially in one who has previously undergone an attack of acute rheumatism or scarlet fever.

Hysterical outbreaks frequently occur in cases of chlorosis. Headaches, such disturbances of the circulation as cause chilliness, with cold extremities, and especially interference with the functions of the pelvic organs are often present, also.

The recovery from uncomplicated anæmia is always certain within six weeks under appropriate treatment. Attacks may possibly recur, however. The treatment is very simple. Such easily digestible foods as contain a maximum amount of iron should be

eaten. Life in the open air, whenever possible, is a good restoring agent. Those who can should live on a farm for a few months. Those who must remain at work should take sun baths mornings and at the noon hour, sleep with the windows wide open, and drink two quarts of milk daily, besides the regular food taken. Most important of all, an iron tonic should be taken over a considerable period of time.

The condition called *progressive anæmia* is fortunately not as common as the simple forms just described. Every one will recall the death from it of a well-known, young American woman—lawyer, suffragist, and political leader—while stumping in California during the last presidential campaign. She was young, robust, full of youthful ardor. Her death, which came as a great shock to all those interested in her fields of endeavor, was attributed to a type of anæmia akin to that known as *progressive*. This young woman suffered from a somewhat rare form, rapidly fatal because her health was run down and her body impoverished by hard and continuous work. Also, constant speaking in public had caused a weakness of the throat which permitted the invasion of poisonous material. This hastened the rapid blood degeneration.

Progressive anæmia cannot always be traced to its cause. The researches of a leading authority prove that it is very often due to chronic septic infection produced by disturbances of the mouth and gums, as well as to gastric and intestinal sepsis. These infections gradually destroy the red blood corpuscles.

This type of anæmia may last for years, but finally yields to treatment. There is no reason why those suffering with it should not round out a full life. It is a disease of maturity. The symptoms come on very slowly, and are often very baffling unless blood examinations

are constantly made. The skin and mucous membranes are pale; there is usually a good deal of subcutaneous fat; and the appetite is not one of a robust vigor. The patient is not incapacitated until the disease has made considerable progress.

Spinal symptoms may appear even before there are pronounced changes in the blood. These consist in numbness and tingling in the legs and feet, weakness, and perhaps great pain. Later, the arms may be involved. A direct diagnosis can be made only by microscopical blood examination. The presence of severe anæmia, little affected by treatment and the preservation of body weight, extreme languor, and accompanied by capricious appetite, and so on, should arouse suspicion.

Too much cannot be said regarding the mouth and teeth, cleanliness of the entire intestinal tract, and the avoidance of fatigue. All women, but especially pregnant women and nursing women, must safeguard their strength. The slight regard that many women have for their health is little short of criminal.

So important to health, happiness, and long life is a robust digestion that parents owe their children a high duty in giving the question more consideration than is usually accorded it. Rich, healthy blood and beautiful, normal development are primarily dependent upon good digestion. We would see fewer anæmic and chlorotic girls with perverted appetites if parents gave more attention to cultivating normal appetites in their children. Mothers should do their utmost to nurse their babies, as the seeds of indigestion are often sown with artificial feedings.

Food should be of the simplest kind. Children should never be hurried nor permitted to hurry at meals. The importance of thorough mastication should be impressed upon them, and, as the emotions directly affect digestion, a

quiet mind and cheerful surroundings are desirable.

A sluggish bowel retards the progress of food from the stomach, and must be guarded against. This tendency is most pronounced in women, because they do not drink enough water, and dry diet favors constipation. On the other hand, the undue consumption of iced drinks is a pernicious custom and should be discouraged. Tea, coffee, and alcohol retard digestion unless used in small quantities and of mild strength. They should never be drunk with meals.

As an article of diet, bread undoubtedly heads the list, and much has been said about it. It has been shown that soft white bread favors indigestion and destroys the teeth. Also, white flour is deficient in something called "vitamine," which is essential to robust development. Therefore, only such bread as contains part of the "middlings" of the grain should be used, or at least given to children, whose diet is not so varied as that of older persons.

The consumption of sugar has increased enormously in the last thirty years. The remarkable change in the habits of people cannot fail to play an important part in the increase of diseases. Cane sugar readily causes gastritis and allied conditions. The taste for sugar is an acquired and perverted one. It is deliberately cultivated. It has been pointed out repeatedly that the body requires very little sugar and this it gets from ordinary foods. Anything beyond this small amount is excess, and hampers the digestive and other processes.

We do not give sufficient thought to the selection of foods in individual cases. One member of a family, with a feebly acting digestive tract, for instance, partakes of the same food as is provided for every one else. Many substances are irritating on account of their consistency. Husks, skins, seeds, heavy oatmeal, and bran do much mis-

chief in inflammatory conditions, whereas in normal cases, they are consumed with no resulting discomfort.

Uncooked vegetables, such as celery, radishes, salad, and cresses, should be forbidden in catarrhal states of the alimentary tract. Condiments and spices, overripe fruits, animal food that is not absolutely fresh, and certain fats and acids are capable of causing intense irritation. It is therefore urged that

more thought and care be given the subject of dietetics, with a view to cultivating or maintaining, in each individual, a robust digestion. By careful selection of food the blood will be enriched and a superior condition of health made possible.

NOTE: A list of foods rich in iron and a list of breathing exercises are available to those readers eager to overcome anæmic conditions.

WHAT READERS ASK

EMILY G.—It gives me pleasure to answer your query on chilblains and frostbites. Frostbites are common in cold weather, especially when it is damp. They attack those portions of the body not well supplied by the blood stream, such as the ears, nose, fingers, and toes.

Those who are subject to chilblains should be especially careful of their feet, and of the hosiery and shoes they wear. Feet should not be exposed to sudden changes of temperature. Hosiery should be woolen, but not too thick. It should be thoroughly dry when put on, and changed as soon as it is damp from perspiration or from moisture leaking through the shoes. The same pair of hose should not be worn two days in succession without washing. On no account is the hosiery to be allowed to dry on the feet, and the practice of putting the feet before the fire is to be condemned. Shoes must not be too light, especially around the ankles. Remedies for chilblains should be both internal and external. Persons subject to chilblains are frequently poorly nourished. Malt extract with cod-liver oil, iron iodide, hypophosphites, and other tonics should be used.

The proper treatment for acute frostbite consists in applying snow or cold-water friction. Under no circumstances should the patient "thaw out" before a fire. Warm drinks may be administered, and if the sensation of cold is severe, a mild stimulant may be given, such as half a teaspoonful of aromatic spirits of ammonia, or a little whisky or brandy. For the immediate relief of itching chilblains, the best application is warm water. A great variety of local remedies have been recommended for chilblains. The following prescriptions are highly advocated:

Equal parts of compound tincture of iodine and collodion. Apply several times a day.

Or: Resorcin, 120 grains; ichthylol, 120 grains; tannin, 120 grains; water, 10 drams. Mix and dissolve. Apply with a camel's-hair brush every night on retiring. In a few minutes the liquid dries into a kind of varnish. This application is highly recommended, but the objections to it are that it causes blackening of the parts, which does not go away for some time, and in the case of very delicate skins, it may produce cracks or fissures which cause considerable pain. In the latter case, the following is preferable, though it does not give such quick results: Resorcin, 1 ounce; gum arabic, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce; talcum powder, 1 ounce; water, 2 ounces. Use in the same manner as the above.

HAROLD.—There is no reason why you should suffer from corns and bunions. After suitable treatment, proper footwear will prevent these. Effective remedy will be mailed on application.

MIRIAM X.—Yes, I am opposed to all depilatories, as they remove the hair only temporarily, and tend to stimulate the growth. The only thing I can recommend is the wax treatment, the formula for which will be mailed you on application.

JEAN K. L.—An effective means of enlarging the bust is by massaging with cocoa butter. Use the palms of the hands in a rotary motion, passing upward from the body to the nipple. This exercise, if persisted in for half an hour daily, is said to show good results in a few months. The Vaucaire tonic, the formula for which I will gladly send you, is helpful when you desire to build up the entire body, also.

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IT'S LIKE FINDING MONEY when you mail us false teeth (with or without gold fillings), old or broken jewelry, diamonds, watches, old gold, silver, platinum, magnetite points, gold or silver ores and nuggets—War Bonds and Stamps. Highest prices paid. Cash by return mail. Goods returned in 10 days if you're not satisfied. The Ohio Smelting & Refining Co., 253 Lennox Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

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"MODERN" DUPLICATOR—A Business Getter. \$1.50 up. 50 to 75 copies from printed, typewritten, no blue or gold. 10,000 firms use it. 30 days' trial. You need one. Booklet free. L. T. Durkin, Reeves & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

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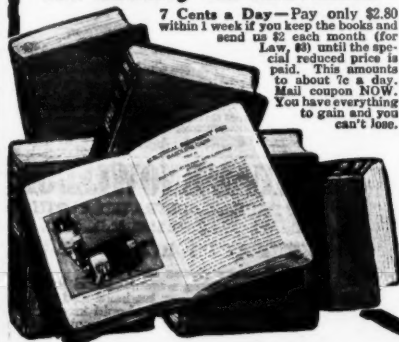
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TWENTY ACRES AND PLENTY

Now is the day of the dissolving dollar and the diminishing dinner. Each month we pay more for what we eat, and eat less for what we pay. Normal conditions will come back when more of us get back to the land. Our furrows of care will disappear when we begin to turn more furrows in the soil.

The dollar of today is worth just about half as much as in 1914. While inflation and other effects of the war have greatly reduced the purchasing power of the dollar, this condition will not endure. If you buy good land now with depreciated dollars your principal will be repaid later in dollars having a normal purchasing power, and in addition you will profit by increased land values. Thus, you will gain, both by the prevailing low prices of land, and the temporary low purchasing power of the dollar.

In this day of unrest, what is the safest investment? LAND. It is the best savings bank in the world. It cannot burn up or blow away, and panics cannot destroy it. Agricultural land is the foundation of all lasting prosperity. Good land is a safe anchor to the windward against the day when old age approaches. Get an income-producing home while your earning capacity is at a high productive stage. You can save enough each month to do this by taking advantage of our liberal terms. Let us improve your land for you on our fair and equitable ten-per-cent-above-cost-plan.

Florida is the oldest and yet newest state in the Union. St. Augustine was the first white settlement made on this continent, and yet less than ten per cent of the good productive lands in Florida are under cultivation. The reasons are plain to those who know the facts. The mistaken idea that Florida is very hot in summer has had much to do with keeping desirable settlers away from the state.

But, believe me, they are coming—thousands strong. Settlers—farmers, stock men, fruit growers, truck gardeners, home-seekers, from every state in the Union—and Canada—are coming to Florida to buy land while it can yet be had at reasonable prices. Those who wait too long will wish they had purchased when they find land quoted at from \$200 to \$500 an acre within the next few years. California passed through just such an era of progression, and today wild lands there, available for citrus culture, are being sold at from \$500 to \$700 an acre, and not much of it to be had at those figures.

Thaw out and think things over. Get away from coal strikes and fuel bills. Come to Florida and make hay while the sun shines. It shines here all the year. Don't believe all the wild tales you've heard about the land of flowers. If you start right here—your battle is half won. Don't come here with a couple of hundred dollars and no knowledge of how to work the land. That kind will fail anywhere.

Gardeners in Orange and adjoining counties cleared over a thousand dollars an acre on truck crops last year. Orange and Grapefruit groves were sold here last fall at as high as \$1,000 to \$3,000 an acre. Individual grove owners cleared as high as \$1,000 and \$1,500 an acre on the sale of their fruit within the last twelve months. These are facts our Big Free Book will substantiate.

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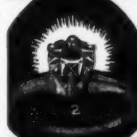
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No. 3. Solid gold antique tooth mounting. Guaranteed genuine Tifnite Gem, almost a carat. Price \$16.50. \$4.50 on arrival. Balance \$3.00 a month.

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Send on 10 days' approval. ☐ Ring ☐ Scarf Pin ☐ La Valliere

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References: Dun's or Standard; Marine National Bank; Union Trust Company; Bank of Pittsburgh, N.A., Pittsburgh.



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A long convalescence and blessed forgetfulness. Suddenly he senses her malignant will. It leads him screaming into the darkness of the night.

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A. P. 2, 20

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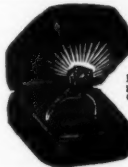
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A Pay-Raising Plan for You!

The American School has a plan that is absolutely guaranteed to increase your worth to your boss and thereby your pay. If it doesn't, you are not out one cent. This plan has been *proved* by THOUSANDS—thousands who have seen the cash benefit of this plan within a few months—seen it continue to increase their pay. This same plan—under the same money-back guarantee—will help put your name at the top of a payroll. Let us know in the coupon below in which line you are interested in earning more.

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What Makes a Superwoman?

Beauty?	NO!
Daintiness?	NO!
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Youth?	NO!
Femininity?	NO!



Seek the Superwoman

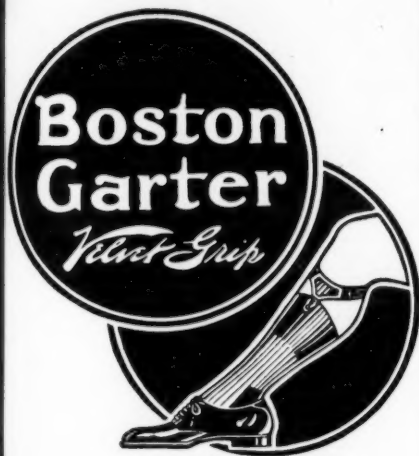
You will find her in almost every generation, in almost every country, in almost every city. She is not a typical adventuress, she is not a genius. The reason for her strong power is occult. The nameless charm is found as often in homely, clumsy, dull, old masculine women as in the reverse of these types.

What Makes a Superwoman?

If you think the problem worth while, why not try to solve it by reading Albert Payson Terhune's great book SUPERWOMEN? From Cleopatra to Lady Hamilton—they are mighty interesting characters. Some of them smashed thrones, some of them were content with wholesale heart smashing. You will know their secret, or rather their secrets, for seldom did two of them follow the same plan of campaign.

We have prepared a very handsome, special, limited edition of the book, worthy of a place on your "best book" shelf. If you subscribe to AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE now you can purchase it for 50c. Send us a money order for \$2.50 and receive SUPERWOMEN postpaid, and in addition, over 1900 pages of splendid fiction throughout the coming year. AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE is the best and smartest purely fiction magazine published. You cannot invest \$2.50 in reading matter to better advantage than by availing yourself of this offer. Send check or money order or if you remit in cash, do not fail to register the envelope. Act now!

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This is a wonderful combination. Here are two of the greatest writers of mystery and scientific detective stories. You can get the Reeve at a remarkably low price and the Poe FREE for a short time only.

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**20,000,000 Americans wear glasses, mostly
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I send herewith one dollar for one bottle of
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agree to return money upon request.

Name.....

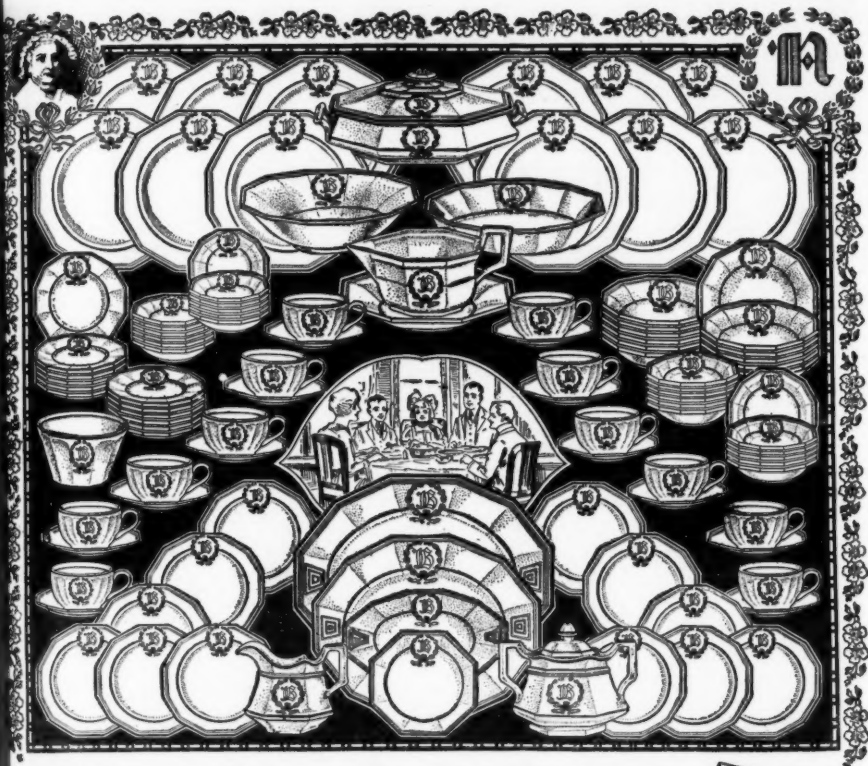
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1 Down—Golden Martha Washington Dinner Set—110 Wonderful Pieces

How can we hope to give you even a faint idea of the exquisite beauty of this wonderful Golden Martha Washington Dinner Set? A picture can't do it because no picture can show the gleam of heavy, lustrous gold comprising the heavy decoration, or the snowy whiteness of each piece where it glistens through the heavy bands of rich gold and the wreath with your initial monogram also in gold. You must see the distinctive shape—the many and varied artistic indentations—which make this pattern so different from all others. It is a reproduction of the most expensive dinner set made.

With Your Initial Monogram In Gold

Send only \$1.00 now. Compare with the most luxurious tableware you have ever seen. If not satisfied return the set in 30 days and we will return your \$1.00 and pay transportation both ways. If you keep them, pay balance in easy monthly payments as stated below. Each piece is fire glazed—guaranteed not to check or craze. Order by No. 327BMA17. Price of complete set of 110 pieces, \$28.55. Send only \$1.00 with coupon, balance \$2.50 per month.

Complete Set Consists of
 12 dinner plates, 9 in.; 12 breakfast plates, 7 in.;
 12 soup plates, 7 1/2 in.; 12 cups; 12 saucers; 12 cereal
 dishes, 6 in.; 12 individual bread and butter plates,
 5 1/2 in.; 12 sauce dishes; 1 platter, 13 1/2 in.; 1 platter,
 11 1/2 in.; 1 reclary dish, 8 1/2 in.; 1 sauce boat tray,
 7 1/2 in.; 1 butter plate, 6 in.; 1 vegetable dish,
 10 1/2 in., with lid (2 pieces); 1 deep bowl, 8 1/2 in.;
 1 shallow bowl, 9 in.; 1 small deep bowl, 6 in.;
 1 gravy boat, 7 1/2 in.; 1 crescent; 1 sugar bowl
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Actual Size of Initial

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I enclose \$1.00. Send 110-piece Golden Martha Washington Dinner Set Number 327BMA17. I am to have 30 days' trial. If not satisfied will ship it back and you will refund my \$1.00 and pay transportation both ways. If I keep it I will pay \$2.50 per month until price, \$28.55, is paid.

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A Month**

And all of this for \$8.50—only \$8.50 per month—a great reduction in watch prices—direct to you—positively the exact price the wholesale dealer would have to pay. Think of the high-grade, guaranteed watch we offer here at such a remarkable price. And, if you wish, you may pay this price at the rate of \$8.50 a month. Indeed, the days of exorbitant watch prices have passed.

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Get the Burlington Watch Book by sending this coupon now. You will know a lot more about watch buying when you read it. You will be able to "steer clear" of the over-priced watches which are no better. Send the coupon today for the watch book and our offer.

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Canadian Office: 355 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba

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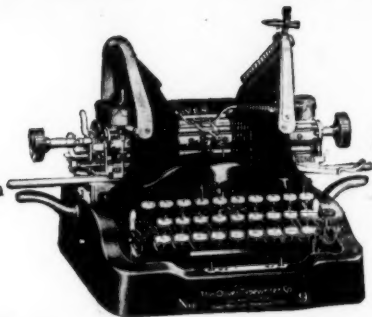
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AN INCH TWICE A DAY KEEPS THE TEETH FROM DECAY UNGAINLY LOOKS THE TOOTH THAT WEARS A CROWN

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"An inch twice
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Colgate's Improved Proverb



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Teach your children the twice-a-day care of the teeth with Colgate's Ribbon Dental Cream—especially the brushing just before going to bed. Teach them that, along with the other good habits of punctuality, obedience and truthfulness. Personal cleanliness is fully as important—and cleanliness of the mouth is a vital part of personal cleanliness.

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